



Sikh Gurus

A Poetic Appreciation

Jaswinder Singh Chadha

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Forward

Although more recent in its time of origin than other world religions, Sikhism is uniquely distinguished by the length of historical time occupied by the unbroken succession of its first sacred leaders, the ten Gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh.

In the present century there has been an increasing movement of Sikhs from their homeland in the Punjab to so many other countries, especially those of the English speaking world, and an increasing need has consequently been felt by younger Sikhs for accessible presentations of the Sikh tradition in English.

Outside the scriptures and the hymns of the Gurus, for which growing number of good English translations are appearing, the most central part of that tradition are the narratives associated with the lives of the Gurus, which have been a core source of inspiration to Sikhs throughout history.

It is Jaswinder Singh Chadha's achievement in this book - about which his following 'Reflections' are so disarmingly humble - to have given new

life to this vital source through his selection of many of the outstanding incidents and achievements associated with the lives of all ten Gurus and through his recasting of these narratives in verse which is characterised both by a straightforward style of expression which should be immediately accessible to the audience at which it is aimed and a charmingly unusual knack of rhyming which should help ensure these inspiring stories fix themselves in the minds of his readers.

Professor Christopher Schackle
School of Oriental and African Studies,
University of London, London.
February, 1999.

Reflections

What started as an occasional poem, here and there, has with the grace of the Lord, gradually materialised in a complete set of poems covering the life and times of all the Sikh Gurus, including 'the last, yet everlasting Guru', the holy Guru Granth Sahib.



There are numerous tales or *Sakhis* associated with the Gurus, yet most of the popularly described ones are covered in this collection. It will certainly serve as a mirror of the Sikh tradition for the majority and indeed a starter for the scholarly.

Several sources have been probed in order to extract the historically correct information but greater and greater discrepancies appeared as a result of this. There is variance here, like elsewhere in historical perceptions, depending on the faith and personal bias of the authors. Many controversies are raging currently that need clarification. The redeeming feature is that the modern Sikh youth has been stirred into action and is trying to clear the cobwebs in Sikh history. Meanwhile I have used the traditionally accepted versions of the *Sakhis*. The most important part of any *Sakhi* is the lesson it teaches

or the thought it conveys. I sincerely hope that I have not erred in this.

The presentation of facts and figures in poetry presented its own problems. The poems are just not written to describe a factual story as it leaves no leeway for poetic liberties that allows one to construe and run in any direction. The poetic experts discouraged me to attempt this project. I carried on, remembering, the last set of lines from Guru Gobind Singh's, '*baintee chaupaalee*', wherein he prayed for the Lord's help in the completion of the holy Granth.

I have, therefore, been constantly praying for Satguru to help me to complete this work and have been rewarded with divine assistance. I was suffering from 'sleep apnea' and failed to have deep and restful sleep. I used to feel lazy and sleepy during the work day. A timely cure came and the doctors at the Royal National Nose, Throat and Ear Hospital, here in London, provided me with a mask and a machine. Breathing pressurised air at night, I get deep and restful sleep and nowadays manage with just 5-6 hours of good sleep and feel quite active during the rest of the day. Secondly the use of computers made a tremendous impact on this work. I could manage to do numerous revisions without





rewriting every time and could produce brochures for distribution and appraisal. And most importantly, when the work was distributed as brochures in the Gurdwaras, in the United kingdom and America, it was encouragingly accepted.

There are several books on 'the life and times of the Sikh Gurus' and each author brings his own speciality to the work. Many of these are, by the very nature of prose, rather voluminous. This work, however, is rather economic in words and you should be able to go through the entire volume in a relatively short time. I pray that it is gripping enough for you to do so.

The story of the Sikh Gurus is inspiring enough and does not need a specially talented writer to augment its impact and indeed I have learned more from this work than what I have been able to give it. My poetic skills have benefited immensely by this indulgence.

Finally I feel that no one has a right on anybody else's time unless it is worth their indulgence.

Finally I feel that no one has a right on anybody else's time unless it is worth their indulgence. I have endeavoured with this thought in mind. If



the poetry does not please you, surely you will
be rewarded from the inspiring tales of the
Gurus.
God bless you.

Jaswinder Singh Chadha

London, January 1999.



Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Sardar Amarjeet Singh of New Delhi, Sardar Rajinder Singh Bhasin and Sardar Bhupinder Singh of London for reading through the poems and making helpful suggestions, to my sons, Dr. Harpreet Singh and Sardar Jaspreet Singh for enhancing my computer literacy and for building me better and faster computers all the time and my wife Amrit Kaur for being so positively inclined towards this activity and finally my grand daughter Diva for keeping me entertained in the midst of my work.

The symbol of 'Ekonkar' on the cover was designed by the late artist, Shanti Dutta and the photograph of the author was taken by the famous photographer, James Cantt.

Comments

Sardar Patwant Singh, Author and Journalist, New Delhi :

With this compilation the author has embarked on another literary voyage which more of us need to undertake as often as possible. Because we lag behind in the field of communications, there is all the more need for Sikhs to reach out and inform people of the egalitarian and humanistic principles on which Sikhism is founded. Widespread ignorance of our faith's *raison d'être* is primarily due to lack of our print and electronic media through which we could have made the stirring events of our history known and enabled the world to better understand Sikh beliefs and traditions. These, after all, have given Sikhs their special brand of confidence, courage and self - esteem.

Sardar Jaswinder Singh Chadha's efforts in this direction deserve the highest praise and will, hopefully, inspire others to turn to poetry and literature for communicating the nobility of our ideals.

Sardar Saran Singh, Editor, Sikh Review, Calcutta : From the advent of Guru Nanak in 1469 upto the realisation of the Khalsa ideal on Vaisakhi of 1699, illustrious Masters of Sikh religion laid the foundations of a humane and dedicated life style, through precept and practice, of the highest moral values. Their biographical account has been preserved in hundred of *Sakhis* or real life episodes - or parables - which supplement and reinforce the divine message embodied in Guru Granth Sahib.

In a remarkably chaste English verse , Jaswinder Singh Chadha has assembled a selection of these *Sakhis* (lit. testimony) in one volume: SIKH GURUS - A POETIC APPRECIATION. The handy book provides glimpses into the lives and times of the Guru-prophets and how they responded to the challenges with rare courage and dignity. Those who value ethical conduct and truthful character will benefit from a perusal of the versified *Sakhis* which link us with our heritage and impart a sense of reverence for the Gurus, making us feel at home in any part of the world. at a time when there is pervasive cynicism, the need to restore faith in the basic unity of human race and collective happiness - *SARBAT KA BHALLA* - is imperative. The book should appeal to all English knowing people, especially to the new generation who is destined to herald the next millenium.

Dr. Hakam Singh, The Sikh Welfare Association, Los Angeles :

Mr Jaswinder Singh is a scientist, a poet and a devout Sikh. In this book, a pleasant blend of these three attributes of the personality of the author is quite evident. The poetry has the precision of a scientist and, at the same time, is imbued with the devotion of a devout Sikh. **Such books can act as beacons for the Sikh youth.**

Dr . I. J. Singh, New York University, New York :

The message of Sikhism lies in the writings of the Sikh Gurus which form the corpus of the Guru Granth and also in their lives which are best illustrated through the parables associated with them rather than a dry recital of the history.

SIKH GURUS: A Poetic Appreciation by Jaswinder Singh Chadha celebrates the message of the Sikh Gurus uniquely. It takes the biographical features of the lives of the Sikh Gurus and the essential teachings that emerge from their parables and renders them into English poetry - simple, elegant and effective. It is a remarkable and attractive tribute to the Sikh Gurus and the religion they founded.

*Sardar Bhupinder Singh, Inter Faith Network for the U.K.,
London :*

The lives of the Sikh Gurus are an inspiration to all who study them. **Jaswinder Singh**, through the art of verse, has brought the stories to life and opened up the teachings to a whole new world.



SIKH GURUS

A
*Poetic
Appreciation*



Guru Nanak Dev
(1469-1539)

Life Sketch of the Guru

Early life

A new moral force
was needed on earth
it came to Punjab
in Guru Nanak's birth

In the village Talwandi
when he was born
he brought in *The Light*
the mists were gone

the Pundit attending
hailed it a divine birth
and the newly arrived
His envoy on earth

a beloved brother,
a much loved son
Nanak was a favourite
special to everyone

Nanak went to school
when he was seven
here he often mused
on God and Heaven



while still at school
he wrote an acrostic,
a thoughtful hymn
so beautifully knit

A *Pundit* taught Nanak
Devnagri and *Sanskrit*
and from a *Mullah*, he
learnt the *Persian* script

Nanak didn't agree
for a *Janaeu* to be worn
and he won't worship
any Gods of stone

with his dad's advice
and money for trade
he went to the market
as his father bade

seeing some *sadhus*
resting under a tree
Nanak was excited
and fed the lot for free



Nanak's *sacha sauda*
or this true bargain
annoyed his father
and caused him pain

on one summer day
Nanak rested under a tree
tired, he fell asleep
his cattle grazed nearby

as Nanak slept, a cobra
raised itself and stood
and like an umbrella
shaded him with its hood

The youth

Nanak calmed down
and peace descended
the change came to him
as the teens ascended

his parents got worried
on his quiet demeanour
they sought advice
to help him recover

tasks were suggested
to help him to settle
like ploughing the fields
or tending the cattle



but when his cattle
strayed as it grazed
neighbours were upset
complaints were raised

the complaints lodged
with chief of the village
had to be dropped
they found no damage

Guru Nanak was married
at the age of eighteen
he settled for a while
in the domestic scene

his elder son, Siri Chand
was born nine years later
another son, Laxmi came
two years thereafter

in his sister's town Sultanpur
Nanak accepted a job
he ran a store of flour
in *Modikhana of Nawab*



Nanak will often get lost
chanting God's name
and flour flowed freely
to the folks who came

news of this generosity
reached *Nawab's* ear
but they found no shortage
and accounts were clear

after four and half years
Nanak called it a day
he abandoned the job
in a mysterious way

he plunged in the river
and couldn't be found
everyone was worried
but he wasn't around

three days on, when
Nanak did reappear
he radiated a glow
and an aura austere

in a world of his own
and soaked in His lore
he was much different
than he was before

evil spirits possess him
people began to say
Nanak was amused
described in this way

Nanak will respond,
" I am mad, I do agree
but am mad for Him
the God Almighty"

the *Qaazi* didn't like
Nanak's repeated stance
there are no Hindus
there is no Mussalmaan

the *Qaazi* and *Nawab*
took Nanak for *Namaz*
but Nanak stood quiet
without untoward cause

the two were annoyed
at Nanak's behaviour
why he ignored *Namaz*
the reason wasn't clear

but Nanak explained
the *Qaazi* was being silly
his mind was elsewhere
in the birth of a filly

and as for dear *Nawab*
wasn't his mind rather full
bargaining for horses
in the *Bazaars* of Kabul



His mission

as the time passed
Nanak itched for a start
he had a message
he needed to impart

for twenty-four years
he travelled the world
always on the move
spreading His word

and always besides him
as he travelled around
was a disciple, Mardana
providing musical sound

a custom made rebeck
was gifted to Nanak
by Nanaki, his sister
for his divine mission



Nanak visited places
for years on end
travelling within India
and countries beyond



he taught against rituals
both straight and bent
that mislead the folks
exploited the innocent

folks were lost in these
in the name of God
Nanak gave them hope
and refreshing thought

he had a charisma
radiated divine glow
Nanak was honoured
wherever he will go

in his visit to Hardwar
Nanak taught the flock
by flinging *Ganga jal*
towards his native crop

the crowds understood
it was a wasted gesture
flinging Ganga waters
to the dead ancestors



he met characters
who needed reformation
he lead them to a path
of the true redemption

he reformed Sajjan Thug
a confidence trickster
who tricked his guests
with designs sinister

he met cannibal Kauda
who thrived on human flesh
Kauda repented to Nanak
and started his life afresh

Bhai Lalo

Lalo was a carpenter
from a lower caste
Nanak shared his food
and stayed as his guest

his mixing with Bhai Lalo
lead to a confrontation
for Nanak had declined
Malik Bhago's invitation

Nanak called the two
and squeezed their bread
milk dripped out of Lalo's
Malik's one yielded blood



Nanak established *Manjis*
the seats of Sikh thought
centres of learning
for teacher and the taught

first *Manji* was established
by the Guru at Eminabad
Lalo was made incharge
despite his lower caste

Babar

when Saidapur fell
to Baber the invader
the Guru and Mardana
ended up as prisoners

Mardana lead a horse
and Nanak carried a bale
they kept singing hymns
as they marched to the jail



Babar came to Nanak
and made his peace
the loot was restored
the prisoners released



after years of travel
Nanak settled down
he founded a place
Kartarpur, *His Town*

people from all castes
formed a community
working and praying
in unity and harmony

it was a beginning
of a people in the making
Sikhism was in the offing
its culture was shaping

Nanak the visionary
chose from his *Sangat*
a guide, a future Guru
named him Guru Angad

at the age of seventy
Guru Nanak passed away
with his successor there
Sikhism was here to stay



Hindus loved the Guru
so did the Mussalman
when he passed away
a dispute began

one wanted him buried
the other cremated
Nanak had left a solution
the matter wasn't debated

flowers from the two
should besides me lay
he takes my body, whose
flowers are fresh next day

floral wreaths were laid
with the body of the sear
on lifting the covers
only flowers were there

Truth is great but greater still is truthful living
Guru Nanak



Chapter 2

Guru Nanak Dev (The Parables)

Punja Sahib

For Guru Nanak and Mardana, the
homeward journey began
Iran and Iraq were covered and then
the length of Afghanistan
gradually the miles were swept and
Peshawar came in sight
they crossed the border and entered
Punjab in sheer delight
on they trudged the dusty passages of
their native terrain
stopping here and there, singing
hymns and praising His name



enroute home near the famous Taxila,
a place well known
site of ancient civilisation, before you
hit the Rawalpindi town,
they reached a village called Hassan
Abdal, it was on the way
besides a hill, they choose a spot and
made and stop to stay





a Muslim fakir, Walli Kandhari by name
lived on the hill
a man of God, but he was proud and
gloated in his will

on the hill gushed a fresh water spring,
a divine gift
it was a source of water for locals and
strangers adrift
the water flowed down, the spring was
by Walli's cottage
the proud fakir kept an eye on it and
the use of water
arrival of Guru on the scene, made the
fakir turn sour
it triggered jealousy in him, it was a
threat to his power

Walli was annoyed and he diverted
the water spring
the village reservoir depleted and he
felt like a king
when Mardana was thirsty, no water
could be found
he searched everywhere but there
was no water around
disappointed, he came to the Guru
and sought his command







The Guru told him to request Walli, it
was a fair demand

Bhai Mardana went up the hill, look-
ing for the drink of water
but Walli won't give him a drop, sent
him back to his master
Mardana came back, gasping for
breath, the thirst was killing
the Guru sent him back to Walli and
see if he was still unwilling
Mardana though tired and thirsty
made it to the fakir again
but Walli won't budge, Mardana was
exhausted and in pain

Guru Nanak heard Mardana and
pointed to him a spot
" go and dig over there and you will
get what you want"
Mardana started digging, the earth,
the roots, the solid matter
and as he pulled a rock, gushed out
a fountain of water
Mardana drank to his fill, the spout
kept up its flow
and with this flow, the spring on the
hill kept going low



Walli was incensed at what he
sensed, anger in his eye
and enraged, Walli engaged a boulder,
swept it down from high
hitting the rocks around, it tumbled
down, all fury and sound
heading for the Guru, the master true,
camping on the ground
the Guru raised his arm, and stopped
the rock against his palm
it came to a halt and once again it
was calm

Walli came down, you could see him
now, humble and weak
and from his face had gone, gone
forever that arrogant streak
he headed straight for the Guru and
fell on the masters feet
and begged forgiveness, the Guru was
kind and sweet
impression of the Guru's palm or *Punja*
is indented on the stone
and Hassan Abdal village has be-
come Punja Sahib town.



A Paradox

Passing through jungles, hilly tracts and water ways
the great Guru Nanak and Mardana kept up the pace
their trail this time covered India's eastern face

the scenes changed as they passed through different parts
lone cottages, hamlets and villages of all sorts
here and there they stayed, captivat-ing people's hearts



Mardana played on a rebeck and together they sang
immense praises in His glory in music and in song
it touched the people and through their hearts it rang

once passing through a village, they were mobbed
they were jeered at by the people, abused and nagged
they were rudely ruffled, their sprits could have sagged

Yet the Guru smiled as he faced the people in his way
and blessed the lot - a long and peaceful stay
an unperturbed life in the village for many a day

passing through another village, as they browsed
their presence was noticed, much interest was aroused
the Guru and Mardana were greeted, fed and housed

the people listened to Nanak and sang his hymns
they were happy to hear him talk on morality and sin
and they served him as their own kith and kin



when the great Guru and Mardana wanted to go
the village folks grew sad, and their spirits went low
they wanted him to stay and keep their minds aglow

Guru Nanak was overwhelmed but they must leave
having enjoyed their stay, parting was no time to grieve
he blessed them with a blessing, you couldn't believe

he wished that they may disperse and scatter away
to newer climes in the world, here and there to stay
not much unlike the Gypsies, always on their way

Nanak was great and there was wis-dom in his words
yet Mardana was puzzled at what he heard
but when the Guru explained, his heart was stirred

*let the wicket stay contained for they are a source of evil
while the good people shall spread goodness
wherever they will move or travel*

Guru Nanak in Arabia

Mecca in Saudi Arabia
where this tale is based
was in good old days
by Guru Nanak graced

attention stays focused
on *Quaba*, house of God
a centre of pilgrimage
for the followers of Islam

Guru Nanak was here
on a divine mission
his message was simple
and meant for everyone

dressed as a fakir
Guru Nanak lay on sand
his feet towards *Quaba*
in Mecca, the holy land

tired, he slept a while
when he was rudely awoken
the *Kazi* and his men
had angrily spoken

they reprimanded him
for pointing his feet
towards sacred *Quaba*
a sacrilege indeed

the Guru faced the *Kazi*
and his band of men
told them to shift his feet
in another direction

the *Kazi* and his men
moved his feet around
the *Quaba* moved in unison
they stood spell bound

the message was simple
and it was very clear
that God is not confined
He is everywhere

*Kaljug, the age we live in
is a chariot of fire
driven by sheer lies
untruth is the charioteer*

Guru Nanak Dev



Bhai Lalo



During his travels
Guru Nanak had met
some shady characters
others from better sets

in this particular tale
which is to follow
I shall tell you about
the good Bhai Lalo

Lalo was a carpenter
his caste was low
he made his living
by the sweat of his brow

Guru Nanak liked him
his honest ways
he stayed with him
for a few days

Lalo's poor house
attracted the crowds
but it was an eyesore
to Malik Bhago the proud



this high caste *Khatri*
was really angry
at Nanak's attitude
his *modus operandi*

Malik invited Nanak
to join at his feast
Nanak spurned the offer
to say the least

Bhago's pride was hurt
he could not swallow
being advised inferior
to the low caste Lalo

Malik Bhago insisted
that Nanak retracted
that Bhago's wealth
was sinfully collected

Nanak asked the two
to fetch their bread
he then performed
this simple act



he simply squeezed
Lalo's *kodra* bread
milk trickled out of it
nothing more was said

when Bhago's bread
was likewise squeezed
the gathering gasped
it was blood that eased

*There is one, only one
with true identity
who does it all
He has no fear
no enmity
an eternal entity,
free from rebirths, He is
a self-existent luminary
attainable through
the grace of the Guru*

*Meditate on Him
true from eternity
He was true in the past
is true in the present
Nanak, He shall be true
in future ages too*

Guru Nanak in Japji



Pirs of Multan

The *Pirs* of Multan felt
their livelihood at stake
Guru Nanak as expected
he may share the cake

and on hearing the news
of the Guru's arrival
the *Pirs* called a meeting
and discussed survival

the Guru was greeted
with a loaded message
the *Pirs* had decided
on the rules of passage

they greeted the Guru
with a glass full of milk
the glass being so full
that it was ready to spill

to the great Guru Nanak
the message was clear
for Nanak, the Guru
there was no place here

The wise Guru Nanak
took a jasmine flower
he placed it on the milk
it floated up there

the bird of wisdom
on the *Pirs* alighted
they understood the Guru
and felt very slighted

The Guru was honoured
by the *Pirs* of Multan
the *Pirs* had undergone
a moral transformation

*The thoughts won't lead you anywhere
If you thought a million times over
The stillness of a silent trance
Shall not reveal 'His Great Stance'
Nor will this hunger cease
Loaded bays won't help appease
Wisdom and devices, millions and more
Shall fail to get you there, ashore
How shall we make 'The Truth' reveal
And tear apart the falsehood veil
Obey His will, act to His command
Inscribed within you, it stays
Nanak, His will, His demand*

Guru Nanak in Japji

Guru Nanak in Hardwar

"Gateway to Heavens",
so named, the city of Hardwar
a home to saints and ascetics
and characters bizarre

it lies on the foothills
of the Himalayan scene
the sun is hot, waters cool
though no longer clean

the city's crowning glory
is the sacred river Ganges
for a dip in its waters
come pilgrims of all ages

Guru Nanak on his mission
visited the city of Hardwar
and on the bank of the river
organised a strange *darbar*

with a bath in the Ganges
Hindu pilgrims start the day
dip after dip in its waters
they wash their sins away

as they bathed. the pilgrims
chanted hymns and flung
water, fistfuls of water
towards the rising sun

like the others in the river,
waded in the master
and from a patch of his own
started flinging water

whilst the Hindus faced east
threw water towards the sun
the Guru flung it westwards
like a reveller playing in fun

the waters thrown by Nanak
were not to the sun directed
the Guru's strange behaviour
was very soon detected

soon a crowd had gathered
everyone lashing his tongue
who was this weird stranger
where was the water being flung

Guru Nanak asked the pilgrims
where was their water bound
to our thirsty ancestors
who are no longer around

Guru Nanak spoke again
a divine glint in his eye
your waters reach the world across
my fields are only here, nearby

*True is the Lord, His name is true
His language is love, its limitless too
We beg of Him to give, we implore
And He bestows, the gifts galore
What do we offer Him in return
To view His durbar, His presence benign
What words should we utter
To beget His affection, His love divine
In the ambrosial hour of the dawn
Muse on Him and meditate
Sing His praises and concentrate
On His virtues, glories of 'The Great'
Your body is an award of your actions
But salvation is His benediction
Says Nanak try to understand this stance
Only the true Lord has the true existence
Guru Nanak in Japji*



Duni Chand Banker

Duni was a banker
who lived in Lahore
he was loaded
with wealth galore

outside his house
flew many a flags
each one representing
millions in his bags

Nanak met Duni
left him a deposit
for safe keeping
a stitching needle

when they meet
in the next world
Duni has to return it
Duni gave his word

Duni and his wife
were in a muddle
Guru Nanak's deposit
was quite a puzzle

then Guru Nanak
explained to Duni
of the transient world
all wealth and money

no one ever did
nor you will take
you will go bereft
of your worldly stake

give up gloating
about this world
and build your life
around His word

the millionaire Duni
gave up his riches
Guru Nanak's needle
had put moral stitches

Duni's mansion
was given away
for Duni had come
a long long way

Dying is the privilege of the brave if they die for a good cause
Guru Nanak

Chapter 3

Guru Angad Dev (1504-1552)

Life Sketch of the Guru

Lehna, your name implies
that we owe you a debt
Guru Nanak had said
the first time they met

and as promised to him
Nanak paid his debt
he made Lehna the Guru
named him Guru Angad

Lehna's ancestral home
the place he was born
was at Mata di Serai
near Ferozpur town

the family moved to
Harike by Satluj river
for Serai was plundered
by the Mughal invader

later on they moved
from Harike to Khadoor
where he was married
and settled for good



a devotee of Durga,
every year he will go
to the Amarnath shrine
the site of eternal glow

one year he stopped
at Kartarpur on the way
here he met Guru Nanak
it was his happiest day

whilst others in his group
carried on for the shrine
Lehna stayed behind,
having found a mint divine

Guru Nanak's commune
was absorbing, uplifting
it anchored to God
the mortals drifting

Lehna will wash dishes,
attend to cooking chores
serve the meals to *sangat*
scrub and wash the floors



there were more jobs
and Lehna did his best
he will man the fan
and seldom let it rest



he will stay busy all day
in chores galore
and be singing hymns
the lofty lore

wet hay needed shifting
Nanak called his sons
the lads didn't bother
but Lehna got it done

the Guru's wife saw him
soaking wet and dripping
she complained to Nanak
it was not befitting

Guru Nanak smiled
pointing to the wet hay
this will indeed adorn him
like a crown one day

in the rain, one night
a temple wall collapsed
the Guru's sons were called
repairs were needed fast



the lads finished the job
but not to satisfaction
Nanak wanted it redone
the boys took no action

when Lehna was called
he rushed into action
and completed the task
to Guru's satisfaction

the sons were by-passed
in choosing a successor
Lehna was selected
despite the filial pressure

Lehna was like an *ang*
a limb of Guru Nanak
the name of Angad
was therefore chosen

Khadoor

Khadoor was chosen
for Angad's new mission
the venue was picked
on Nanak's suggestion

Guru Angad rose early
and meditated for hours
at the daybreak hour
he will join the prayers

he had a healing touch
Angad catered for the sick
many lepers will come
crowds were always thick

the *Sangats* sang hymns,
at mealtimes ate together
food was free for everyone
the caste was not a bother

The Guru, and his wife
lived on a frugal fringe
they earned their living
twisting a bark into *munj*

Guru Angad helped
modify old Punjabi script
into modern *Gurmukhi*
Adi Granth is written in it

he will often spend
time with the children
teaching them Punjabi
playing games for fun

often in the afternoons
watching a wrestling bout
was a favourite pastime
with the Guru's crowd

as for the evening time
both *Satta and Balwand*
will sing hymns and
entertain the *sangat*

when I die, said the Guru
look at me no more
simply sing His praises and
cremate me to His lore

and when he was gone
they sang hymns galore
His praises rang on earth
in Heavens rang His lore

*If a hundred moons came through
and a thousand suns did rise
with so much light to view
it is but utter dark
in the absence of the Guru*

Guru Angad Dev



Chapter 4

Guru Angad Dev Tales of the Guru

Humayun

When Humayun was defeated, he retreated
and after this war, he headed for Lahore
he felt quaint, sought solace from a saint
so he made a detour and came to Khadoor
a place well known as Guru Nanak's throne
he found Guru Angad and the Sikh *sangat*

The Guru was busy, Humayun felt uneasy
having had to wait, he was getting irate
a long wait and Humayun was desperate
he pulled out his sword, and angrily roared
the Guru opened his eyes, saw him in sight
and spoke to the emperor, roaring in anger

Humayun, relax my dear, as you are here
where you must bow like a humble fellow
your sword was cold against Sher Shah bold
you accepted defeat and made a retreat
now when you are here with saints and sears
you show your strength, it is a foolish attempt

the emperor was humbled as he mumbled
for Guru's blessings for battles in the offing
the King was blessed but Guru Angad stressed
when things are fine, and the kingdom is thine
you must rule with care, like an emperor fair
and remember your Lord, the Almighty God

SLOK

*He evolves, reserves and allocates
for the beings He creates
He sees them all the way
from inception to their final day
whom should Nanak call
for He is all in all*

PAURI

*Grandeur of The Great, one can not relate
the benevolent Giver, His deeds
provide for creature's needs
the beings tread the road, He has bestowed
Nanak besides Him, there is no other
He acts to His desire
Guru Angad Dev*

Tappa

When Guru Angad came
to settle at Khadoor
the fate of yogi Tappa
took a turn for worse

he was being ignored
people flocked to Angad
Tappa's pride was hurt
his income dwindled

Tappa spoke viciously
of the revered Guru
he advised the people
that he wasn't true

it was a hot summer
and no rains arrived
the land was parched
and some cattle died

the impending famine
caused panic and fear
the *Jats* wanted rain
offered many a prayer

Tappa advised the *Jats*
to throw the Guru away
as he was the cause
of the accursed days

the *Jats* asked the Guru
to make the rain
but the Guru advised them
it was God's domain

the *Jats* of Khadoor
threw the Guru out
asked him to stay away
from the neighbourhood

they turned to Tappa
and asked him for rain
Tappa tried many a trick
but were all in vain

Tappa feared for his life
he had failed the job
the *Jats* were furious
like a frenzied mob

Amar came to Khadoor
looking for Guru Angad
he could find no Guru
he found no *sangat*

the Guru had left
at Tappa's behest
Amardas was angry
he was very upset

Amar told the *Jats*
that Tappa was a fake
drag him in the fields
the draught will break

wherever you take him
till the sunset hour
shall get the rain
the bountiful shower

they dragged the man
and covered every field
the rain poured forth
Tappa's fate was sealed

tired and bedraggled
he succumbed to strain
it rained in plenty
but Tappa was gone

Yet Guru Angad Dev
advised Baba Amardas
that the rain is upto God
one mustn't trespass

for people like Tappa
the Sikhs must behave
even to the vicious
be forgiving and suave

Slok

*Air is like the Guru
Water, like a father
The great respectable earth
Is like a mother
Two nurses, he and she
Are the night and day
In the midst of these
The world does play
Actions, good and bad
Are assessed at His door
Deeds bring you
closer to Him or keep you afar
Those who stay
Immersed in His meditation
Their labour gets rewarded
purity of visage , veneration
Nanak, many around them
Are freed as well, earn liberation*

Guru Angad Dev



Bibi Jeeva

Guru Nanak had started it
Langar was now a tradition
it gathered momentum
at Guru Angad's mission

the good Bhai Jeeva
lived outside *Khadoor*
he used to bring *Khichari*
everyday for the *Langar*

after Bhai Jeeva died
his daughter, Bibi Jeeva
she was equally devoted
and kept up the *seva*

one day, she prepared
Khichari for the *Sangat*
but as she was leaving
she heard a thunder

and in a few moments
the weather turned insane
the wind started to howl
there was incessant rain

helpless Jeeva prayed
for God to intervene
to hold the weather
to stop the wind and rain

the weather cleared
with a brighter look
the Bibi was delighted
at the turn it took

she reached Khadoor
all in good time
the *Sangats* ate together
but not the Guru sublime

the great Guru Angad
gave the food a miss
Jeeva didn't understand
what had gone amiss

Guru Angad explained
to Bibi Jeeva and all
that she had prayed
for the weather to stall

she obviously had
interfered with His way
for whatever He does
we must simply obey

Chapter 5

Guru Amardas (1479-1574)

Life Sketch of the Guru

Punjab was blessed again
another Guru was born
Tej and Sulakhani of Baasarkay
were blessed with a son

Amardas was born in Baasarkay
and in Baasarkay he grew
the years of life in the village
rolled on before he knew

he married Mansa Devi
when he was twenty four
and kept living in Baasarkay
for several years more

the couple had four children
two sons and two daughters
and like everyone around
kept busy in worldly matters

Amar was a pious person
but had never been on pilgrimage
his first visit to Hardwar
was at forty two years of age

later he will go every year
and one year he met a stranger
a friendly type, a holy man
who showed annoyance at Amar

the man called him '*Nigurra*'
or Gurules who was wasting his life
Amar must find himself a Guru
to end his mental strife

the stranger's word '*Nigurra*'
kept ringing in Amar's ear
he looked around for a Guru
his goal was getting clear

he had a niece called Amro
Amar often heard her sing
compositions of Guru Nanak
melodious and compelling hymns

the gist of one such hymn
stressed the role of a Guru
Amardas now saw the light
and yearned for a Guru

Lehna, Amro's dear father
had now become Guru Angad
Guru Nanak had made him
the Guru to guide the *sangat*

Amar met Guru Angad
and saw in him his shining star
he had found himself a Guru
his search for Guru was over

Amar began a newer life
a life of love and devotion
there was work here and worship
and service was a passion

he will bring water for the Guru
leaving early in the morn
he fetched it from the river
and returned before the dawn

he carried it to Khadoor
made a bath for Guru Angad
later he will join in prayers
with the morning *Sangat*

he will collect firewood
help in scrubbing the floors
devote the day to learning
fitting in endless chores

Then in the evening hours
after the "*Sodar path*"
Amar helped the Guru again
with the evening bath

before finishing his day
he helped the Guru to bed
he will then walk back home
to Goindwaal for rest

in the year fifteen fifty two
Amardas was made the Guru
the honour came to him
when he was seventy two

the Sikh *sangats* rejoiced
but Guru Angad's son Datu
was angry and he kicked
Amardas, the anointed Guru

Datu named himself the Guru
Amar stayed out of his way
but the Sikhs didn't accept him
till Datu called it a day

Guru Amardas went to Kurkushetra
on the festival of solar eclipse
where he taught against rituals
into which the people slip

the Sikhs were often bothered
when they went to wells for water
they were pelted with stones
for flouting the caste order

the Guru encouraged the Sikhs
to dig the wells of their own
Baoli Sahib was dug by them
in eighty four steps of stone

it took three years to complete
and it stands to this day
a tribute to the Guru and the Sikhs
who laboured all the way

the tradition of the *langar*
was strengthened in Amardas's time
the Sikh *sangat* dined together
like a brotherhood sublime

Raja of Haripur of Kangra hills
even the great Mughal Akbar
sat with the common folks
and relished *Guru ka langer*

Akbar offered a gift of land
but it was politely refused
funds must come from Sikhs
only Sikh sources were used

when it came to his successor
there were two contenders
his sons-in-law, Rama the elder
and Jetha, the younger

the two sons-in-law of the Guru
were assigned to build a stage
they began the job and finished it
but failed to please the Sage

they had another go at it
but were once again rejected
Rama gave up after four attempts
but Jetha wasn't dejected

after seven attempts of Jetha
it was approved by the Guru
Jetha had passed the final test
his devotion was really true

Guru Amardas honoured him
and Jetha was made the Guru
the choice pleased everyone
it was deserved and due

Guru Amardas died in 1574
at the age of ninety four
he had nurtured the tree of Sikhism
the tree had blossomed forth

Chapter 6

Guru Amardas Tales of the Guru



Homeless Amaru

Amardas was old
he was well over sixty
but his love for the Guru
was intense and lofty

every morning he brought
water for the Guru's bath
fresh water from Beas
via an accustomed path

rain never deterred him
nor did the winter cold
rugged path didn't matter
no obstacle could hold

it was a pitch dark night
the weather was atrocious
Amardas lost his way
inspite of being cautious



the walkway took him
along some weaver's huts
strewn around with obstacles
their professional butts



in the darkness of night
he hit against a boulder
he fell down but saved
the pitcher on his shoulder

in the stillness of night
the sound of a fall
was heard by the weaver
against his outer wall

the kind man murmured
who could be there
hurting himself
in such dreadful scare

his wife then blurted,
she was really vicious
it must be mad Amaru
that homeless curse

Amardas stood up
with his pale of water
hearing the woman
he happened to utter



Amar serves his Guru
happily and glad
she must be crazy
one who calls him mad

next morning a weaver
came to Guru Angad
brought his crazy wife
to the astonished *sangat*

the episode of the night
was described to the Guru
how she had turned mad
after cursing Amaru

Guru Angad blessed her
she was normal again
she begged forgiveness
she had gone insane

Guru Angad declared
Amardas was blessed
as a home for homeless
a hope for the distressed

Leave it to God

Guru Amardas's fame
scaled still higher
but he had to face
a jealous empire

khatris were jealous
and there were *sheikhs*
they didn't like the Sikhs
and resorted to hate

the two groups joined
to bother the Sikhs
they often tried
some hurtful tricks

their boys will taunt
pelt the Sikhs with stones
as they came for water
in the common zone

Sikh pitchers ruptured
but they won't retaliate
the Guru advised them
to stay calm and sedate

the Sikhs switched
to using cotton sacks
but the attacks continued
from *khatri* and *sheikhs*



when their cotton sacks
were ripped by rowdies
the Guru still insisted
not to hurt anybody

the Sikhs switched
to pitchers of copper
but the attacks kept up
making life unbearable

a group of *sanaïysis*
travelled to see the Guru
sheikh youths pelted stones
and blinded a *sadhu*

the *sanyasis* were angry
and battered the youth
killing and maiming some
for behaving uncouth

they weren't deterred
the seasoned criminals
and often snatched
the Sikh belongings



a group of *Pathans*
sojourned in the town
they spent a night
as the weather frowned



the night was dark
there was howling wind
the dust made it worse
it was ideal for theft

the *sheikh* boys stole
the visitor's load
including a donkey
carrying ingots of gold

the theft was detected
by the angry *Pathans*
and they threatened
to burn the town

as they searched the town
they heard their donkey bray
the theft was uncovered
punishment was on the way

they beat the *sheikh* boys
and killed a few
the punishment had come
straight from the Blue



life became peaceful
around this town
the Sikhs were safe
and no longer frowned

the Sikhs sought advice
to tackle such a menace
the Guru advised them
complete forbearance

Guru Amardas added
that if the vicious men
sometimes keep on and on
three times in succession

then the God Himself
sends a punishment
that straightens the lot
and brings an end

*Don't call her Sati if she kills herself in fire
burning live in her husband's funeral pyre
one who dies from the shock of separation
is a Sati in truth, a Sati worth mention*

Guru Amardas

Datu's Wrath



Amardas's Guruship
caused much concern
to the jealous Datu
Guru Angad's son

offerings mounted
also the Guru's respect
Datu found all this
difficult to digest

in a fit of annoyance
he came to Guru durbar
as he saw Guru Amardas
he fumed with anger

Datu kicked the Guru
hard from behind
the Guru was hurt
but he didn't mind

the Guru stood up
started to massage
Datu's leg that had hit
and injured the sage



politely the Guru
said to his assailant
that he was sorry
if Datu was hurt



Datu was fretting
he taunted the sage
“you aren’t the master”
displaying his rage

Amardas collected
offerings to the Guru
loaded these on a donkey
and gave them to Datu

the Guru thought it
better to go away
unannounced the Guru
left for Baasarkay

he locked himself
in a room, he knew
and pasted a notice
on the door to view

anyone who will try
and open the door
shall suffer and has
trouble in store



back in Goindwaal
there was an uproar
Sikhs couldn't find
their Guru any more

after the search failed
they had a thought
Guru Amardas's mare
was forthwith brought

revered Baba Buddha
adorned the mare
and they followed it
any place, anywhere

the animal led them
to village Baasarkay
to the Guru's hut
with a notice on display

when the Sikhs read
the notice on the door
the joy and excitement
went through the floor

Baba Buddha thought
and he gave a call
they bored a hole and
entered through the wall

he entered the room
Guru Amardas was there
the Guru was intrigued
at the whole affair

the Guru came out
he wouldn't reprimand
for the door stayed shut
as was his command

the Guru met the Sikhs
he was overwhelmed
at the love displayed
by the Sikh *sangat*

together they returned
back to Goindwaal
leaving Baasarkay
and a hole in the wall

*Seeking His confines or His limit
many have cried their wits out
no one does know
the confines of His show*

Guru Nanak in Japji

Bibi Bhani



The nice Bibi Bhani,
Guru Amardas's daughter
was married to Jetha,
who became a Guru later

as a devoted Sikh
she served all around
she looked after the Guru
her devotion was sound

she got up every day
before the early dawn
and helped Guru Amardas
with his morning *Ishnan*

one morning, the Guru
was sitting on a stool
Bhani was helping him
with his bath as usual

one leg of the stool
appeared to be cracking
the Guru was seated there
as it was breaking



Bhani acted at once
put her foot underneath
balancing the seat
for the Guru's benefit



there was a bare nail
which was showing
it plunged into her foot
blood started flowing

the Bibi was injured
but she kept at it
kept on with the bath
till it was complete

as she took a towel
and the Guru was dried
the Guru could see
the blood on one side

when she explained
what had happened
he was overwhelmed
as he was saddened

the Guru asked her
if Bhani does aspire
to an overwhelming
wish or desire



she said, she wanted Jetha
to become the next Guru
this was her prayer
to the revered Guru

she also prayed
that the Guruship stays
within the Sodhi family
for the future days

Bibi Bhani's prayers
were accepted by the Guru
the future did witness
her wishes came true

*Don't call those two
husband and wife,
if they merely sit
together in life
but if a single light
guides the two,
they are husband and wife
right and true*

Guru Amardas

Chapter 7

Guru Ramdas (1534-1581)

Life Sketch of the Guru

Childhood

He was the fourth Guru
on Guru Nanak's throne
they called him "Jetha"
a name used for eldest son

besides his parents
Jetha had a brother,
younger than himself
and still younger, a sister

Jetha was merely seven
when his parents died
leaving three little kids
against time and tide

the kids found it hard
to make both ends meet
but Jetha tried his best
to stand on his feet

Jetha started selling
a snack of boiled peas
but being so young
he suffered great unease

his aged granny came
to live with them at Lahore
but the relatives here
made her sick and sore

she took the children
to village Baasarkay
their ancestral home
to settle and to stay

Baasarkay

Jetha kept up his trade
of selling the snack
his granny will cook it
and he sold the stock

often this generous lad
gave the food for free
to *sadhus* and the poor
the wayside needy

Baasarkay enjoyed
a spiritual atmosphere
saint Baba Amardas
was born over here

Amardas himself
arrived here one day
he had come home
to take his family away

Amardas was planning
a new habitation
the town of Goindwaal
in the Sikh tradition

Jetha met Amardas
joined the volunteers
leaving for Goindwaal
for working over there

Goindwaal

revered Guru Angad
had deputised Amardas
to build a new town
by the river Beas

many Sikhs came forth
as they heard the call
offering their services
for building Goindwaal

soon after the start
Amar was made the Guru
the work on the town
gathered momentum too

Jetha plunged in the task
with complete devotion
his labours were spread
in every direction

he helped in the kitchen
brought firewood and water
washed the dishes and
swept the floors off litter

in building Goindwaal
Jetha's labours stood tall
he earned many a laurel
and admiration from all

Jetha took no time
to grasp the Guru's lore
he became well versed
in the Guru's Word

Baoli

digging a huge *Baoli*
to provide water for all
was a major project
in building Goindwaal

Sikhs came to serve
from everywhere
Jetha served the guests
with utmost fervor

he worked all hours
shifting debris and sand
his devotion was complete
whatever the demand

Marriage

when the Guru's wife
saw this handsome man
labouring tirelessly
her heart was won

she hinted to the Guru
who stood beside her
that here was a match
for Bhani, their daughter

the Guru considered it
and he gladly agreed
Jetha and Bibi Bhani
were happily married

Akbar

Akbar came to Lahore
chasing a rebel brother
who ran on his arrival
was no further bother

But Brahmins of Lahore
who were rather jealous
used this royal visit
against Guru Amardas

they lodged a petition
against the revered Guru
claiming his teachings
belittled the Hindu view

Guru Amardas deputed
Jetha to go to Lahore
to represent the Guru
at the royal durbar

Jetha was brilliant
firm in convictions
he was fully devoted
and ready for action

Jetha's explanations
carried the day
the Brahmins petition
was spurned away

Akbar was pleased
with the Sikh approach
the Guru durbar
was beyond reproach

later while returning
to the Delhi durbar
Akbar decided to stop
at Guru's Goindwaal

he was impressed
with the set-up there
and dined with others
in the *Guru ka langar*

Amritsar

a new site was acquired
it was pious and quaint
it had hosted in the past
many sages and saints

the great Guru Nanak
had passed by here
envisioning here a town
of divine atmosphere

later Guru Amardas
found here a magic herb
it had helped to cure
Guru Angad's thumb

Guru Amardas decided
to build a new town
on this historic site
Jetha completed his plan

Guru Amardas had said,
"whilst *Kaljug* is dragging
men shall be short lived
and their wisdoms flagging"

" this new habitation
will be a spiritual town
to enlighten their life
in their short sojourn"

revered Guru Amardas
laid the foundation
for this spiritual home
of divine inspiration

the project was started
and a housing precinct,
called *Guru ka Mahal*
was the first to be built

after that they built
a shopping parade,
called *Guru ka Bazaar*
for traders and the trade

the town began
as *Guru ka Chakk*
it became *Ramdaspur*
as the work progressed

Guru Amardas recalled
Jetha to *Goindwaal*
and bestowed on him
greatest honour of all

the aged Guru Amardas
made Jetha the Guru
he became Guru Ramdas
for Sikhs, the fourth Guru

Guru Ramdas stayed on
till Amardas passed away
then he was back on site
for work and to stay

a huge pool was dug
at a chosen spot on site
its ambrosial water, *Amrit*
confers blissfull delight

with the voluntary labour
of the devoted Sikhs
the pool was strengthened
in mortar and bricks

a pier jetting inwards
led to the central portion
where a platform served
for *diwans* and for *kirtan*

Amritsar, pool of nectar,
is the name of the town
the pool and Harmandir
are its glory and crown

yearning to be a Guru
Prithi envied young Arjan
but Arjan deserved
the high veneration

Prithi didn't like Arjan
and was really sore
he arranged for Arjan
to go to Lahore

but Arjan grew weary
being away from the Guru
he wrote lyrical letters
to view the Guru

some of his letters
were intercepted by Prithi
but one got through
and exposed a strategy

Guru Ramdas sent
emissaries of Guru durbar
to bring home Arjan
back to Amritsar

Arjan was made the Guru
much to Prithi's annoyance
Prithi became an enemy
and led a life of defiance

The end

after choosing the Guru
Guru Ramdas was ready
the time had arrived
for his divine journey

from Amritsar durbar
he moved to Goindwaal
where three days later
he bowed to His call

after a bath in the *Baoli*
he came to morning *diwan*
he sat in the *sangat*
and was gradually gone

he advised Guru Arjan
to build a spiritual wonder
at the centre of the pool
the present *Harmandar*

and to the Sikh *sangat*
it was the Guru's advice
not to grieve his death
when the end arrives

he wanted the sangat
to sing Guru's hymns
in praise of God Almighty
and abide by His will

*He who calls himself a Sikh
a Sikh of the Lord, a Sikh of the Guru
rises early on, and he contemplates
on His Name, the Name of the True
exerts himself in the morning, bathes
immerses in the pool of 'His Glow'
heeds Guru's advice, meditates on Him
all sins disappear, all pains and woe
then, with the advent of the day
he sings Gurbani, the Guru's lore
contemplates on Him, whilst standing
sitting down, through every chore
he who muses every moment on Him
contemplates on Him in every breath
endears himself to the Guru
the Guru cherishes such a Gursikh
Guru's advice comes to that Gursikh
who is blessed, whom He does pick
Nanak craves for the dust
the dust of such a Sikh's feet
who keeps repeating His Name
and inspires others to repeat*

Guru Ramdas

Chapter 8
Guru Ramdas
Tales of the Guru



Dukh Bhanjan

Duni Chand of Patti
was a wealthy man
ruler of the town
but he was very vain

gloated in his ego
he belittled everyone
he boasted of feeding
the entire population

if anyone insisted
about God above all
he will punish the man
to submit to his will

even his relations
his wife and daughters
sang his praises
for food and shelter



one of his daughters
was devoted to God
she defied the father
and praised the God



Duni was annoyed
angry beyond reason
he must teach her
a very special lesson

he married her off
to a crippled man
who was a leper
and always in pain

the girl accepted it
as the divine will
she was so destined
she bore no ill will

the newly married
were thrown on road
Duni kept saying
let us see your God

the girl assisted
pulling her husband
on a make do trolley
on the rugged roads



ousted from Patti
they headed for Jhabbal
always on the road
often in the jungle



she will leave him
under some tree
and fetch some food
mostly by begging

gradually they reached
a new habitation
it was being built
by the Guru's men

revered Guru Ramdas
was building a town
with voluntary labour
of men and women

the couple rested
under a shady tree
beside a water pond
in the open country

exhausted and tired
and full of hunger
the girl left her husband
to fetch some *langar*



the crippled leper
sat fully astonished
as he watched the scene
in a pool beside him

he saw black crows
alight and dip in water
then emerge as swans
with snow white feathers

a train of thought
started in his mind
these waters must
contain a herb divine

how he wished
to bathe in this water
he may be cured
of crippling disorder

it was difficult
but he took a chance
he leapt in the water
and fell in the pond

luckily the water
was not very deep
he was astonished
he was on his feet

after a few dips
the pain had ceased
he had been cured
of the cursed disease



when he emerged
he was fully cured
of the wretched disease
he had long endured

but when his wife
came back with *langar*
she looked for him
to appease his hunger

she saw a healthy
and a handsome man
she felt very scared
for her husband

the man tried his best
to assure the girl
that he was her husband
cured by God's will

they started quarrelling
and were in dispute
a passer-by suggested
to seek Guru's verdict



he took the two
to the Guru *darbar*
and presented them
to Guru Ramdas

the Guru heard
their complete tale
and advised the couple
of what did prevail

the man's story
was completely true
he was her husband
there in her view

the girl's love for God
had revealed the spot
of that curative pool
'the *Amrit pot*'

the grateful couple
were blessed by the Guru
their life was happy
and their happiness true

at the spot revealed
a great pool was dug
which has come to us
as *sarover* at Amritsar

Bhai Bhikari

An admirer of Guru Ramdas
came to the Guru durbar
he wanted to learn
about the Sikh behaviour



the Guru directed him
to a *Gursikh*, Bhai Bhikari
the life of this man
will answer his query

at Bhai Bhikari's place
there were celebrations
his son was getting married
there were friends and relations

everyone was enjoying
no expense was spared
there was singing and dancing
festivity was in the air

the guest from the Guru
was accorded much respect
the Bhai honoured him
even his feet's dust

after the son's wedding
at the brides home
the *barat* came back
the bride and the groom



as they arrived at home
the groom felt a tummy pain
and minutes later
he was dead and gone

the occasion turned sour
as the relatives cried
the couple had hardly met
and the groom had died

Bhai Bhikari was calm
in this major tragedy
he went about calmly
adhered to his duty

the funeral arrangements
were already made
the boy was cremated
Bhikhari was sedate

the guest was puzzled
as indeed he was sad
musing on Bhai Bhikari
a most unusual dad

the Bhai was aware
of the impending death
yet he went ahead
and married his lad

he had condiments
and a stock of firewood
his quiet preparations
weren't understood

and he had made
a cot for the funeral pyre
to carry the corpse
to be consumed in fire

the guest asked him
why he married the son
when he was aware
that the death was certain

the boy were to die
after the wedding
how I could dare
defy God's bidding

the boy was His gift
and he took him away
I am grateful to Him
for his terrestrial stay

the observer came back
to the Guru durbar
he was much wiser
on the Sikh behaviour

*If a tongue were to become
a hundred thousand , even more
multiplied some twenty times
to raise this score
if each of these tongues
did recite a hundred thousand time
the name of the Lord sublime
this path, this way
rungs of this ladder lead
and blend you
with the Lord indeed
listening to the talk of Heavens
does stimulate
the lowly worms are stirred
and wish to emulate
Nanak, you reach Him
only through His grace
all else is false
a wayward race*

Guru Nanak in Japji

Humility

Guru Nanak's elder son
Siri Chand was saintly
founder of *Udassy sect*,
he thought differently

having lost to be a Guru
Siri Chand will not see
the revered Guru Angad
or later Guru Amardas *ji*

but as he grew old
his anger went cold
he arrived for a visit
at Guru Ramdas's fold

Guru Ramdas was happy
he welcomed his guest
entertained his entourage
gave him much respect

seeing the House of Nanak
basking in such glory
Siri Chand was overcome
with a touch of jealousy

Baba Siri Chand spoke
to Guru Ramdas the sage
your long flowing beard
must be quite a rage

Siri Chand continued
that he was intrigued
why the Guru's beard
was so long indeed

Guru Ramdas's reply
shook the man on his seat
"with it, I wipe the dust
off holy men's feet"

then the revered Guru
started wiping his feet
Siri was embarrassed
the Guru was so sweet

Siri Chand spoke again
that only now he knew
why he lost the race
to become the Guru



Hardyal Tappa

Guru Angad was compelled
to leave Goindwaal
a Tappa was instrumental
in this ill advised tale

the man finally suffered
a dreadful fate
he succumbed to his death
through Jats irate

another Tappa, Hardyal
a descendant of the old
was now condemning
Guru Ramdas's fold

when the Baoli at Goindwaal
came to completion
the event was celebrated
in the Sikh traditiopn

Guru Ramdas organised
a major langar
hoardes were invited
also this trouble maker

Tappa was greedy
but he won't come
to join the celebration
though he was welcome

the Guru declared
to give to everyone
who participated
a gold coin

the temptation
was too much for the man
but he couldn't be seen
so he sent his son

the boy in disguise
entered jumping a wall
he broke his leg
he had a bad fall

the people sitting there
recognised the boy
they all condemned
his father's ploy

Tappa's pretence
his overwhelming greed
was finally exposed
a revelation indeed

Chapter 9

Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606)

Life sketch of the Guru

Arjan was the youngest
of Guru Ramdas's sons
a poet and a scholar
he wielded a versatile pen

divinity and scholarship
endeared him to his father
but brought him enmity
from Prithi, his brother

Prithi Chand and his wife
were full of jealousy
they connived against him
with all their energy

Prithi was the eldest
yet he seemed to know
that he shall lose to Arjan
race to the next Guru

near the decision time,
Arjan was sent to Lahore
to stay on till recalled
Arjan was lonely and sore

Arjan couldn't bear
the prolonged separation
he wrote to the Guru
letters in warm narration

the first two of his letters
came into Prithi's hands
when the third arrived
Guru Ramdas was present

young Arjan was recalled
Prithi was shattered
he was humiliated
yet he wasn't bothered

Arjan became the Guru
Prithi was surpassed
the man couldn't accept
his ambitions dashed

Prithi was like an animal
who had been mauled
his objectives changed
to Guru Arjan's fall

Prithi's followers held
Prithi Chand as the Guru
and kept the Sikhs away
from the master true

The revered Guru Arjan
patiently kept his poise
he went on with his mission
without grudge or noise

as the funds from Sikhs
were taken by Prithi's men
langar became meagre
the Guru stayed on ration

the Sikhs came around
and accepted Guru Arjan
Bhai Gurdas and Baba Budda
helped in this direction

Harmandar

a pool of holy water
was dug and completed
at the centre of the pool
a platform was seated

the platform was used
as venue for *diwan*
a temple was built here
later by Guru Arjan

Guru Arjan completed
this spiritual wonder
a temple in the pool
called it Harmandar

the foundation stone
was laid by the *Sufi pir*
the much admired
Musalmaan, Mian Mir

the Harmandar floor
was designed to be low
for one to step in humility
onto the floor below

the Harmandar doors
opened on all sides
for free access to all
Sikhs and others beside

a few miles from here
another project was on
it was completed and
called Taran Taaran

close to the Guru's heart
was people's welfare
he encouraged self help
as in digging for water



Guru Arjan built a *baoli*
a reservoir of water at Lahore
this was a welfare project
there were several more

Adi Granth

assisted by Bhai Gurdas
Guru Arjan collated for view
hymns of all the Gurus
for reference and review

included with these
were hymns of Indian saints
Kabir, Farid, and others
with thoughts compatible

so compiled the *Adi Granth*
was respected by all
commiserate with contents
its status stood tall



the Granth was installed
in the holy Harmandar
surrounded by the pool
Amrit pool of Amritsar

the volume was placed
high up on a pedestal
under a canopy
as on a throne celestial

the Guru and the Sikhs
sat lower on the floor
thus honouring the Granth
and the divine lore

a complaint was lodged
Granth was derogatory to Islam
Akbar had it read to himself
he liked the hymns and psalms

the king offered gold
and robes of honour too
to Bhai Gurdas and Baba Budda
who had assisted the Guru

Sikh faith was doing well
Sikhs were all over Punjab
but the changed times
brought in a vicious mob

Jahangir's wrath

Jahangir, unlike Akbar
was neither liberal nor kind
he was a zealot and a bigot
Sikh faith troubled his mind

Jahangir had recorded
his determined intent
to destroy the Sikh faith
and all it meant

Akbar' s policy of neutrality
was forthwith reversed
and the Sikh Guru Arjan
was unduly coerced

Jahangir needed an excuse
to apprehend the Guru
God provided him one
through his son Khusroo

the defeated son Khusroo
stopped by as Guru's guest
he was made welcome
and managed some rest

but the King claimed
that the Guru had prayed
for success to Khusroo
and had offered him aid

the Guru was summoned
to see the king at Lahore
here the Guru was charged
by the great emperor

Guru Arjan was fined
sum of two *lakh rupees*
but if he accepted Islam
he could go free

the penalty of death
was duly decreed
if the Guru didn't comply
with either of these

the Sikhs were willing
to pay the hefty fine
but the Guru won't accept
to toe this cowardly line

as for accepting Islam
the revered Guru Arjan
stood firm on his ground
and refused conversion

Treacherous Chandu

Chandu was an officer
a high up in the Raj
he advised the king
he will persuade the sage

Jahangir left the Guru
to be coerced by Chandu
but this man had
his own grudge to undo

Chandu's daughter was
engaged to Guru's son
but Chandu misbehaved
and the match was undone

Chandu was horrified
he pined to harm the Guru
with the Guru in his hands
it was a dream come true

Chandu failed to persuade
the Guru to change his mind
he resorted to torture
of the meanest kind

the Guru was detained
in a dark and dreary dungeon
in the month of June
Lahore was like an oven

the Guru was made to sit
on a heated pan
shovels of burning sand
were poured on his person

the Guru stayed calm
through this treatment
and as to his torturers
he showed no hatred

with the blistered body
he was plunged in the river
Guru Arjan passed away
and the torture was over

*Without gathering virtues
Worship can't be done
Glory is in the word of God
It lends a beauteous visage
And always, a joyous heart*

Guru Nanak in Japji



Chapter 10

Guru Arjan Dev Tales of the Guru



Martyrdom of the Guru

Much of Guru Arjan's life
passed in Akbar's time
when worship of a faith
was not a crime

Sikhism was doing well
Sikhs were all over Punjab
but the enemy appeared
and closed in to rob

Jahangir became the king
he wasn't liberal or kind
but a zealot and a bigot
Sikh faith troubled his mind

Jahangir wrote in *Tuzuk*
Arjan fascinates them all
Hindus and even Muslims
are heeding to his call



Jahangir wrote further
that it was his intent
to convert the Guru and
destroy all that he meant



Akbar's policy of neutrality
was forthwith reversed
the pressure was increased
Guru Arjan was coerced



Jahangir needed an excuse
and God provided him one
Khusroo, the rebel prince
came to stay with Guru Arjan

Khusroo was made welcome
as anyone would be
he stayed there and rested
the cooked meals were free

The Guru was summoned
to come to Lahore
where he was charged
on lies and lies galore

The emperor alleged
that the Guru had prayed
for success to the prince
and had offered him aid





Jahangir who had ordered
death sentence on Khusroo
imposed a hefty fine
two *lakh rupees* on the Guru

An option was offered
to accept the Islamic way
but the Guru won't agree
to convert or to pay

Officer Chandu suggested
he will persuade the Guru
make him see the light
and alter his view

The king agreed
he put the Guru in his care
the man had sinister plans
the king wasn't aware

Chandu Lal was a Hindu
serving the *Raj* at Lahore
with a grudge against Guru,
he irked to settle a score

Chandu's men had sought
a match for his daughter
it was settled to Guru's son
could it be any better?

Yet Chandu didn't like it
as he was heard to mutter
"what a match- like laying
a royal brick in the gutter"

The news reached the Guru
the Sikhs were annoyed
the match was annulled
Chandu was horrified

With the Guru in his hold
Chandu asked him to savour
revival of the match
and advise in Islam's favour

But Guru Arjan won't agree
on one count or the other
Chandu was most annoyed
and resorted to torture

Guru Arjan was confined
in a dark and dingy dungeon
the heat was oppressing
Lahore was like an oven

The Guru was made to sit
on a red hot metal plate
a picture of endurance
the Guru showed no hate

They poured on the Guru
shovels of burning sand
calmly abiding in His will
he sat through this demand

Then in a pot of water
the Guru was made to sit
the water was boiled
and kept in a boiling fit

he was moved to the river
Blistered and barely alive
they lowered him in the water
but he rose to The High

*My heart is longing
it pines to see the Guru
like a chatrik bird
craves for a drop of dew
the thirst persists
all peace is gone
without having seen
the holy person
what a bliss
a blissful vision
a view of the Guru
the saintly person*

Guru Arjan Dev

Chapter 11

Guru Hargobind (1595-1644)



Life Sketch of the Guru

Guru Arjan died a gruesome death
tortured at the hands of Mughal
Hargobind, a boy of sheer eleven
was left to face this vicious devil

Guru Arjan had the foresight
and saw the years approaching
he trained the son in martial arts
to face the times encroaching

Hargobind was born at Wadali
and was Guru Arjan's only son
he carried arms as a little boy
and was riding horses early on

Baba Buddha was his teacher
he quickly grasped the Guru's lore
archery and swordsmanship
Hargobind excelled on every score



before Guru Arjan was arrested
he could see the end in view
he thus installed the young boy
Hargobind as the next Guru



when he was sworn in as Guru
Hargobind carried two swords
Miri, for the temporal authority
and *Piri* for the spiritual world

and in planning the future
the Guru adopted a martial plan
he gradually trained the Sikhs
into soldiers of distinction

Lohgarh, a fort was built
to defend the city of Amritsar
and *Akal Takht* was established
just next to Harmandar

Hargobind advised the Sikhs
and the Sikhs started to bring
offerings of arms and horses
a force was in the making

five hundred trained Sikhs
formed an armed brigade
and from another fifty Sikhs
a bodyguard was raised



on a plot devised by Chandu
the Guru was held at Fort Gwalior
it was a prisoners nest
several Rajas were also here

at the time of being released
he won't leave till others were free
the lot were granted freedom
the king did, in the end agree

the Guru had three wives
Damodri, Nanaki, and Mahan
pillars of his household
and he had six children

the Guru founded Hargobindpur
the times were somewhat better
he built here a Sikh centre, a mosque
and a *baoli* - a reservoir of water

he founded Kiratpur as well
Kohloor's ruler donated the land
the Raja was freed from Gwalior
when the Guru took a stand

Shahjehan's men were on a hunt
when a hawk fell in the Sikh's way
the Sikhs won't part with the bird
the angry Mughal showed dismay

a royal force was dispatched
the Sikhs fought it at Amritsar
defeating the Mughal enemy
and killing their commander

an offering of horses for the Guru
was waylaid by the Mughal at Lahore
Bidhi, a clever Sikh retrieved it
leaving the enemy in furore

angry Mughal waged a battle
it was fought out at Maharaj
the Guru's Sikhs were victorious
defeated stood the Mughal Raj

a pool was dug on the battle site
to celebrate the Guru's victory
this memorial called Gurusar
lends glory to Sikh history

yet another battle was won
against deserter Painda Khan
who came with a Mughal force
but got killed, this foolish pathan

The Guru's life style was soldierly
yet he was a saint at heart
rigorous at his religious calling
under him, Sikhism flourished a lot

in the course of his travels
Guru's word touched many a heart
besides Punjab, he went visiting
Kashmir, UP and Maharashtra

an indelible impression was left
wherever the Guru had gone
he was addressed as the true king
in Punjabi, *Sachay Padshah*

towards the last years of his life
Guru Hargobind moved to Kiratpur
Sikhism was flourishing here
his presence made a difference

Hargobind chose his grandson
Har Rai, installed him as the Guru
later while meditating one day
he left for the realm of the True

as Har Rai became the Guru
Sikhism differed from before
the Sixth Guru had altered it
by adding militarism to its core

Chapter 12

Guru Hargobind Tales of the Guru

Horses for the Guru

The Mughal regime
was running amuck
anything but Islam
wasn't tolerated

It hated the Hindus
and eyed the Sikhs
committed atrocities
which make one sick

Guru Hargobind
visionary as he was
Could see the future
going even worse

He started to build
an army of Sikhs
kind of soldier saints
to defend the Truth

Horses were needed
for a force in the offing
the Sikhs were advised
horses were wanted

a horse merchant
Karoria from Kabul
prepared himself
to obey this call

colts from an aquatic
or a *daraiyee* breed
he had raised from birth
with pride indeed

the brother horses
grew into a fine pair
were ready now to serve
under Guru's care

With colts for the Guru
Karoria was on his way
he took more horses
he wanted to sell away

A royal party at Lahore
came over to view
they liked the horses
specially these two

The king's men
were most impressed
when it came to buying
they were distressed



Karoria won't sell
his *daraiyee* pair
those lovely horses
couldn't be theirs

The Mughal officials
forcibly took those two
leaving poor Karoria
hurt and subdued

The sad tale
was told to the Guru
where Bidhi Chand
was listening too

Bidhi Chand of Malwa
was a Punjabi *jat*
a real He-man
from the daring lot

On hearing the tale
Bidhi volunteered
to snatch the horses
from the Mughal snare



Knowing his prowess
the Guru agreed
for Bidhi to undertake
such a daunting feat



Bidhi came to Lahore
in a hay seller's garb
then to the Royal stables
he was full of charm



With his glib talk
he won the keeper's heart
and was allowed inside
to inspect the Royal stock

Bidhi offered to ride
that handsome colt
reluctantly the keeper
gave him its hold

Riding the horse
Bidhi gave it a kick
the horse bolted
and was out in a flick

Stunned they stood
as he made his escape
ending up at Guru's feet
in Guru's landscape





Karoria was delighted
he thanked Bidhi Chand
a task was accomplished
of tremendous content



In time this horse
sadder grew
missing its brother
whom it always knew

The Guru and the Sikhs
felt rather bad
the horse was unhappy
it looked very sad

Bidhi was advised
to go back to Lahore
and return the horse
or fetch its brother

Bidhi took a trip
in no apprehension
to fetch the other horse
in Royal detention

The man this time
posed as a fortune-teller
dressed as a *fakir*
he looked quite a feller



The staff at the stables
begged him and sought
information on the thief
who wasn't caught

Now Bidhi Chand knew
and described the tale
of the horse and the thief
in full detail

They showed him around
their confidence was won
the doors were locked
as a sheer precaution

Bidhi lovingly stroked
that *daraiyee* colt
admiring the animal
that loved his hold

He expressed a desire
to ride this brother
of the stolen horse
taken from its tether

His wish was granted
he jumped up to ride
then moved the animal
to the open side

Overlooking the river
he halted and stood
the lads eyed him
no one understood

He kicked the horse
it jumped in the river
the staff at the stables
felt a quiver

After a minor swim
they were across
now they bolted
quick and fast

The brother horses
were soon united
the Guru and the Sikhs
were all delighted

*Pilgrimages, fasts and donations
rendered to boost one's ego
are like an elephant's bath
go unrewarded, a wasted show*

Guru Teg Bahadur



Bibi Viro's Wedding



Viro's wedding day
was finally here
Amritsar looked lovely
the sky was blue and clear

Guru Hargobind himself
in a nearby forest strip
was out with his Sikhs
on a hunting trip

they saw a beautiful hawk
as it winged the skies
lending enchantment
to the viewing eyes

the Sikhs were excited
wanting to catch the bird
they released their hawk
to this intent

present on this day
in this forest wing
was an Imperial party
hunting for the king



equally enamoured
of this precious bird
they also chased the hawk
combing the forest

Guru Hargobind's hawk
leapt higher and higher
it caught up with the bird
and brought home the flyer

the Imperial officers
were hurt and annoyed
and confronted the Sikhs
with contempt unalloyed

they pressed the Sikhs
to handover the hawk
it must go to the king
and join the royal stock

but the Sikhs refused
to return the hawk
to Shahjahan's officials
it came as a shock

it led to a skirmish
the two parties clashed
two officers were killed
and their leader slashed

defiance by the Sikhs
· angered Shahjahan
it was time that the Sikhs
were taught a lesson



a detachment of men
under Mukhlis Khan
was sent to punish
the Guru and his men

Viro's marriage party
was temporarily halted
it was held at Jhabbal
till the enemy was thwarted

the Mughal onslaught
was halted at Lohgarh Fort
by a handful of Sikhs and
a wooden canon in support

women and the children
were moved to Ramsar
but Viro got left behind
alone in her chamber

by the nightfall
the Mughal laid a siege
Bibi Viro was still here
and at great unease



finally the help arrived
cracking through the siege
rescued Bibi Viro
securing her release

six Sikh commanders
with two hundred men each
were ready by the morning
within enemy's reach

a severe battle was fought
many a brave Sikh died
but the enemy suffered worse
and lost to the Guru's side

in a hand to hand combat
with Guru Hargobind
Mukhlis Khan fumbled
and got himself killed

after a depressing battle
that killed many a friend
Guru Hargobind reverted
to the duty in hand

Bibi Viro was married
gracefully to the groom
thus ending in joy
two days of gloom

Gwalior

Jahangir was bent
on hurting the Guru
but face to face
he changed his view

some wise advisers
advised the king
that the complaints
were sheer figments

the king requested
the Guru's company
he was travelling
to the Agra city

Guru Hargobind
agreed to travel
discussed with him
religion and morals

Chandu and others
of the king's regime
contrived a plan
against Hargobind

they colluded with
a fortune teller
Jahangir was told
his life was in danger

a calamity is seen
to be hovering
it could be avoided
by a fakir's praying

he was advised
to request Hargobind
to pray for him
forty days on end

after these days
the devils did hope
the king shall forget
the whole episode

Jahangir begged
the Guru to consider
praying for him
there in Gwalior

Guru Hargobind
acceded to the king
he knew of course
the underlying sting

the Gwalior fort
was a fortified prison
located on a hill
for security reason

the Guru entered
this new environment
the way out
was non existent

there were here
princes of the states
fifty two in all
cursing their fates

the group of princes
felt very happy
finding Guru Hargobind
in their company

the arrival of the Guru
brought them closer
they will join him
in prayers together

the moral lessons
were imparted
the princes felt
richly rewarded

the time passed
in service and prayer
they hardly noticed
they were in Gwalior

the Sikhs in Punjab
were restless, unclear
as were many others
of Guru's admirers

the Sufi fakir
revered Mian Mir
was much concerned
and met Jahangir

orders were issued
to release the Guru
the Guru declined
and refused to leave

the Guru insisted
that Rajas there
must also be freed
from fort Gwalior

the king issued
another decree
princes holding to Guru
shall all go free

Guru Hargobind wore
an enormous wear
clinging to its hem
the princes went clear

*All love, all affection is false
that is how, I have known the world
Everyone here is serving the self
their own well being, their own comfort
and they cry, its mine, its mine
gloated in their own selfish ego
there is no one but You in the end
strange is the custom of the worldly show
the foolish mind hasn't learnt it yet
despite the continuous lesson
Nanak, those who sing His praises
shall swim across the worldly ocean*

Guru Teg Bahadur



Baba Atal

Atal was the son
of Guru Hargobind
he died as a boy
in circumstances unkind

playing with Mohan
Atal enjoyed the game
but on loosing a turn
he was not the same

his friend Mohan
got bitten by a snake
Atal couldn't find him
after the break

Mohan was taken
back to his home
he died of the bite
didn't finish the game

Atal went to his house
saw Mohan by the door
wrapped up in linens
prostrate on the floor

verily he thought
Mohan was asleep
yet he shook him
for the errand to keep



the game was pending
and Mohan must play
he should get up
start without delay

the dead boy Mohan
was heard to say
let us go then Atal
and finish the play

Mohan stood up
as no one expected
there was rejoicing
the dead resurrected

the news of the miracle
spread through the city
the Guru heard it
but he wasn't happy

he advised little Atal
it was wrong to play
miracles, for these
were not the Sikh way



he reminded Atal
his grandpa Guru Arjan
suffered great atrocities
but didn't work one

Arjan won't indulge
in the occult power
he gave up his life,
Sikhism's great tower

Atal was thoughtful
endowed with talents
he realised atonce
what his act had meant

Atal stayed calm
went to a green pasture
laid himself on the grass
and pulled on a cover

miraculously the boy
as he prayed
was recalled to Heavens
while Mohan played



Chandu



Chandu's machinations
had finally failed
his plot against the Guru
had derailed

the emperor Jahangir
in fact came around
he honoured Hargobind
retracted his ground

Chandu's tale made
the king very angry
he passed the devil
to the Guru's custody

the Guru may punish
Chandu as he liked
but Guru's punishment
he may have survived

Chandu's will receive
five blows a day
with a wretched shoe
in a public display



when he was brought
to holy Amritsar
the crowds gathered
to curse the cur



poised on a donkey
with a blackened face
Chandu was taken
from place to place

Chandu was abused
stoned and booed
folks spitted on him
as he was towed

he was brought
to Lahore from Amritsar
supported on sides
by Sikh stalwarts

it was Jetha and
the Sikh Bidhi Chand
they dragged him on
with a crowd behind

people in Lahore
turned out in numbers
it was free for all
as missiles thundered



there was Gurditta
popping up his corn
the furnace was fired
the sand was in the pan



the news reached him
Chandu was coming
Gurditta was angry
the news was stunning

Gurditta recalled
how Chandu, this devil
had forced him partake
in a horrid evil

he was made to pour
the burning sand
on revered Guru Arjan
on Chandu's command

desperate Gurditta
waited his chance
to punish this man
the devil atonce

he worked his bellows
and puffed more air
the flames erupted
and spattered splinters



he stirred the sand
desperate on his seat
it turned red hot
and radiated heat

the procession
of Chandu and crowd
turned the corner
into Gurditta's road

Gurditta jumped up
and shouted Hi Hi
leave the wretched devil
he is all for me

he poured on Chandu
the burning sand
and hit his shovel
hard on his head

Chandu was old
by now very tired
one blow killed him
the man expired



Bibi Kaulaan

Daughter of a *Maulvi*
Kaulaan was a pretty girl
she learned *Koran*
from the *Sufi* Mian Mir

the girl was devoted
enjoyed hymns in *Koran*
she was also interested
in other religions

she had read *Gita*
and also *Ramayan*
and under Mian Mir
was now, a *Gurbani* fan

her father was shocked
when he heard of this
he warned the girl
of its consequences

when Guru Hargobind
came to Lahore town
she will secretly go
and attend the *Kirtan*

she was spotted once
in Guru's congregation
a complaint was lodged
a serious allegation

on the complaint
a *fatua* was issued
a punishment of death
was duly decreed

when Kaulaan heard
of punishment severe
she made it to Mian Mir
in a secret wear

the Sufi fakir
was gravely concerned
he hastened with her
to Guru Hargobind

the master realised
helping the lass
meant seeking enmity
with the ruling class

yet the girl was sent
with a Sikh bodyguard
to the holy Amritsar
to join Sikh sangat

she was provided
with a place to live
where she could worship
and she was secure

one day Bibi Kaulaan
begrudged her fate
she was desirous
of someone to relate

she wished she had
a daughter or a son
or her name
shall be forever gone

instead the Guru
bequeathed the girl
a permanent
long-lived memorial

a pool was dug
and named *Kaulsar*
it immortalised
the Maulvis daughter

Chapter 13

Guru Har Rai (1630-1661)

Life sketch of the Guru

Har Rai was born at Kiratpur
A lovely place to view
founded by Guru Hargobind
his grandpa, the sixth Guru

even as a little boy, Har Rai
had a mind with spiritual traits
Guru Hargobind saw and felt
the potential of this state

Thus choosing the next Guru
honour went to Har Rai
he became the seventh Guru
aged fourteen, a mere boy

Har Rai had a strong physique
but he was tender at heart
good at riding a horse, yet
saintly in mind and thought

like Guru Hargobind, Har Rai
kept an army of Sikhs, fighting fit
and had a bodyguard
devoted men of martial grit

The Guru ran a vast dispensary
. with rare drugs in stock
endowed with healing skills
he served the needy flock

Shahjehan needed a rare herb
when prince Dara Shikoh fell ill
as this herb couldn't be found
Guru Har Rai was requested

the precious herb was found
in Guru Har Rai's collection
administered to prince Dara
it cured his affliction

to propagate the Sikh faith
Har Rai deployed the new converts
Bhagwangir and Suthereshah
gave the faith further spurts

Aurengzeb annexed the throne
defeating prince Dara Shikoh
Dara came to Guru Har Rai
he was welcomed by the Guru

the visit was misconstrued
by Aurengzeb and his men
who needed an excuse
against rising Sikh religion

the king invited the Gurù
but Har Rai will not listen
finally he did agree
to send Ram, his elder son

when Ram arrived at Delhi
he was asked to read a hymn
a word in the hymn, thought Ram
may cause offence to the king

thus while reading the hymn
Ram Rai quickly improvised
he read *beimaan* for *musalmaan*
the king was satisfied

But Guru Har Rai was annoyed
the lad had acted mean
Ram was barred from the Guru
for tempering with the hymn

Har Rai made his younger son
Harkrishan, the next Guru
and a day after anointing him
he left for the realm of 'The True'

Chapter 14

Guru Har Rai Tales of the Guru

Ram Rai

The fanatic Aurengzeb
embodiment of cruelty
asked Guru Har Rai
to meet him at Delhi

but Guru Har Rai
will just not agree
Auregzeb tried to hit back
He was really angry

he dispatched a force
under one Zalam Khan
to overcome the Guru
by forceful means

but this Zalam Khan
was at the end of his days
he developed stomach ache
and died on the way

Danda Khan Kandhari
was next dispatched
he was slaughtered
enroute as he slept

the third time, it was
Nahar Khan Sharanpuri
whose troops perished
in a cholera fury

finally Aurengzeb sent
Shiv Dayal, an officer
to persuade the Guru
to meet the emperor

Guru Har Rai agreed
but sent an ambassador
to meet Aurengzeb
the bigoted emperor

Ram Rai was elder
of Har Rai's sons
an intelligent man
an admired person

Ram Rai was sent
to see the emperor
but he must uphold
the Guru durbar

Aurengzeb called him
to the Royal durbar
Ram presented himself
amongst the courtiers

the king wanted him
to perform a miracle
Ram was well versed
expert in this vehicle

he showed the king
many astonishing feats
the king was amazed
at his powers of occult

the king decided
to honour this man
and use him in future
as a political pawn

Ram Rai was asked
to quote and review
references to Islam in
hymns of the Gurus

Ram Rai cited
he quoted a hymn
from Guru Nanak
on the fate of man

*Mitti mussalmaan ki
pairay paiee kumiar
khar bhanday ittan kian
jaldi karay pukar*

as for a muslim grave
its clay is sought
the potter moulds it
into bricks and pots

the clay laments
and it does shriek
fired in a furnace
you hear it beseech

Ram Rai was scared
the word *Mussalmaan*
may offend the king
so he changed the hymn

he substituted the word
beimaan for *mussalmaan*
the king was satisfied
so was the Royal clan

when Guru Har Rai
heard what he had said
the Guru was annoyed
and much distressed

Ram Rai was debarred
from Guru's presence
for he had tempered
with Guru Nanak's hymn

Ram left and started
a sect of his own
the king bequeathed him
a site, now Dehradun

*If the hands, feet and the body are soiled
Water could wash the dirt away
For clothes polluted with urine
A wash with soap and water will clean
Mind corrupted with sins galore
Needs 'Nam', contemplation of His lore
Virtue or sin are not sheer words
Your actions are recorded
And are as such rewarded
As you sow so shall you reap
Nanak, you will come and go
as He does seek*

Guru Nanak in Japji



Selini

In seventeenth century
an Italian called Selini
travelled through India
seeking life's meaning

he visited the country
its length and breadth
learning Indian thought
and probing its depth

he was keen on religion
its strength and quality
he sought information
on religion and morality

after visiting Hardwar
he arrived in Punjab
to meet Guru Har Rai
and see the Guru durbar

he travelled to Kiratpur
and saw the Great Guru
the charismatic Har Rai
his radiant view

Selini sat in the *sangat*
and enjoyed the *kirtan*
he felt uplifted with
Guru Nanak's hymns

later he asked the Guru
there have been prophets
indeed many of them
both in the east and west

Christ and Mohammed
Ram and then Krishan
and here in Punjab
the great Guru Nanak

who in the Guru's view
ranks the foremost
to get you salvation
from the difficult world

*"prophets are guides
who show you the way
to redeem yourself
on the judgement day*

*but your final ascent
to the divine zone
depends only on you
your actions alone*

*in the final analysis
it is your own deeds
that will determine
your end indeed"*

*He resides in every world
Everywhere are His stores
He filled them in one go
Whatever He liked to pour
He does it all
Sees everything through
Nanak, the creations
Of 'The True' are true
All praise to Him, all glory
Primal and eternal Lord
Untarnished and indestructible
He stays the same, 'The Great'
Age after age
In the same unaltered state*

Guru Nanak in Japji

Chapter 15

Guru Harkrishan (1656-1664)

Life Sketch of the Guru

Harkrishan was the eighth Guru
the younger son of Guru Har Rai
he was born in Punjab at Kiratpur
a sweet and handsome boy

he was merely five years old
when he ascended the Guru's throne
soon afterwards his father died
leaving him all alone

the eighth Guru was articulate
his tender looks radiated charm
he thrilled the Sikhs as he spoke
they felt elated and warm

his elder brother Ram Rai,
was renounced by Guru Har Rai
Ram had become jealous
and wanted to harm the boy

Ram complained to Aurengzeb
to have Harkrishan bound
the Guru was called to Delhi
to be charged on some ground

Harkrishan consulted the elders
who said that the Guru knew best
the Guru decided to go to Delhi
he was prepared for the worst

Sikh *sangats* were worried
as the prospects were adverse
at the time of Guru's departure
they will just not disperse

they walked with him a long way
returned home from Sirsa river
the Guru and party carried on
meeting admirers everywhere

Lal Chand of one village
a Brahmin, who was very proud
came and asked the Guru
if he will recite the Gita aloud

the Brahmin was ill advised
as he was on a testing spree
if the Guru could recite Gita
he will call it a good memory

the Guru invited the village fool
Chhaju, the dullest of the dull
after being blessed by the Guru
he could recite the Gita in full

when the party reached Delhi
they waited for the king
they stayed with old admirers
Rani and Raja Jai Singh

the emperor sent some items
for the Guru to choose a gift
the Guru took a saintly robe
from a load of riches to sift

the king appeared appeased
yet he itched to see a miracle
but Guru Harkrishan won't agree
to dabble in this vehicle

the king couldn't see the Guru
as cholera gripped the city
the Guru and the Sikhs got busy
nursing the sick and needy

outbreak of small pox followed
the Guru contracted it as well
he took it as the divine will
and was ready for farewell

from Raja Jai Singh residence
he was moved to Jamuna bank
Sikh sangats all around him
were saddened as he sank

the next Guru had to be named
Harkrishan just managed to say
Baba Bakala, a clue to help
To guide them on their way

Guru Harkrishan passed away
whilst he wasn't even eight
a Guru for twenty-six months
a child Guru but really great

*Meditate on Guru Harkrishan
let your thoughts in him stay
for knowing Guru Harkrishan
will sweep your pains away*

Guru Gobind Singh

Chapter 16

Guru Harkrishan Tales of the Guru



Pundit Lalo

Taking the Guru
for a little boy
Pundit Lalo devised
a defaming ploy

he came and sat
in Guru's *sangat*
later he stood up
and coyly muttered

Lalo would like
the famous Guru
to recite the Gita
verses he knew

The Guru knew
that the Panditji
had come there
on a testing spree




he was told to call
a dithering fool
dullest of the dull
who knew no school

the village fool
Chhaju was called
he was presented
to Guru Harkrishan

Guru Harkrishan
waived his stick
and blessed the man
with a gentle flick

the man recited
the Gita aloud
Panditji's face
became a shroud

Lalo apologised
for his accesses
and was forgiven
with Guru's blessings



Testing the Guru

Aurengzeb wished to see
if Harkrishan will perform
magic and miracles
as did his brother Ram

but Guru Harkrishan
declined such action
as it was contrary
to the Sikh tradition

Auregzeb then tried
indirectly to assess
the Guru's powers
his spiritual prowess

Mirza Jai Singh
who was Guru's host
agreed to the king's ploy
To put the Guru to test

wife of Raja Jai Singh
the queen, the *Rani*
was dressed as a maid
and her maid as the *Rani*

Jai Singh then showed up
at the Guru's quarters
and invited Harkrishan
for a get together

the visionary Harkrishan
knew of Raja's mission
but agreed to his request
to visit his mansion

when he was ushered
in the stately hall
the Guru saw the Rani
In a servant's overall

he touched the Rani
with a flick of his stick
expressed disapproval
of her resorting to a trick

the Guru went back
quick as he came
leaving the Royals
aghast and in shame

Recognise ye the whole human race as one

Guru Gobind Singh

Aurengzeb and the Guru



Guru Har Rai had advised
Harkrishan the child Guru
not to see Aurengzeb, even if
the king pressurised him to

after his arrival in Delhi
Harkrishan made it clear
to his host, Mirza Jai Singh
he will not see the emperor

as the king's invitations
were simply turned down
Aurengzeb desire to see him
had grown and grown

Auregzeb arranged to send
his son Bahadur Shah
to go and meet the Guru
and report on what he saw

the little boy, the prince
was welcomed by Harkrishan
the prince was impressed
to see the Guru in person



but when he invited
the Guru on king 's behest
Guru Harkrishan declined
to accede to this request



Guru Harkrishan agreed
to send the king a message
a letter in his own hand
an enlightening passage

the note contained
a hymn, Guru Nanak's thought
decrying a life of splendour
without the fear of God

one morning the king
dressed himself as a fakir
walked to the Guru's quarters
and stood outside his door

when Harkrishan was told
the king was at his door
the gates were ordered shut
the king stood sore

the king had to leave
disappointed over again
his wishes unfulfilled
to see Guru Harkrishan



with God's will, there was
a smallpox outbreak
it made further contact
impossible to make

the Providence intervened
the Guru passed away
Aurengzeb was unfulfilled
couldn't have his way

(Guru Harkrishan's message to Aurengzeb)

*What good is all the food
or the clothing to wear
if the True Lord is absent from heart
if He is not there
fruits, butter, flour
variety of sweets and meat
garments and comfortable bed
a load of pleasurable treat
matter not, neither huge armies
civil servants, the servants and Khans
nor a royal mode of living
in palaces or palatial mansions
Nanak, everything but the True Lord
will disappear, shall be gone*

Guru Nanak Dev

Chapter 17

Guru Teg Bahadur (1624-1675)



Life sketch of the Guru

Teg was born at Amritsar
a son to Guru Hargobind
the times were atrocious
Aurengzeb was the king

Hinduism was in trouble
Teg listened to its call
he sacrificed his life
and saved it from a fall

Guru Harkishan died
leaving just a clue
implying Teg Bahadur
as the next Guru

Teg was quite a scholar
devoted to classic arts
besides he was trained
in weapons of all sorts



as an expert horseman,
he rode with distinction
yet he spent hours on end
in divine meditation



at the age of twelve
he was married to Gujar
his wedding at Amritsar
was quite a gathering



during last nine years
of Guru Hargobind's life
Teg lived at Kiratpur
with parents and his wife

Bakala

when his father died
Teg, his wife and mother
moved to village Bakala
where they lived together

twenty years of his life
Teg spent in meditation
collating his thoughts
in divine concentration





as Guru Harkrishan died
naming a '*Baba Bakala*'
this clue to the next Guru
produced a *Gurus mela*



every street in Bakala
boasted of having a Guru
the Sikhs couldn't tell
the false from the true

amongst the pretenders
was a man called Dhir
a nephew of Teg Bahadur
who caused a major stir

Makhan Shah Labana,
came looking for the Guru
he must find the master
to pay him a promised due

he combed Bakala village
searched in every street
saw the claimants one by one
and paid towards their greed

but he wasn't satisfied
then he heard of one Teg
a recluse, who lived aloof
may be, he wasn't a fake



when he went to see him
Teg was in meditation
Makhan paid his respects
and left a small donation

Teg came out of his trance
and called after the trader
reminded him of his promise
when his ship was in danger

Makhan felt all excited
for having found the Guru
he climbed atop the roof
and announced the news

Dhir Mal was annoyed
and planned to hit back
he and his *Mahants*
organised a vicious attack

they robbed Guru durbar
attempted to kill the Guru
they didn't succeed
Dhir and his wicked crew

one Shihan fired a bullet
it grazed Teg's shoulder
but Teg was unperturbed
the wound was only minor

Makhan and the Sikhs
chased unholy *Mahants*
brought back the loot
including the *holy Granth*

Teg removed himself
for quiet meditation
to atone himself
for the Sikhs's actions

Amritsar

at the invitation of Sikhs
Teg travelled to Amritsar
but he was denied access
couldn't enter Harmandar

a grandson of Prithi Chand
Harji Mina was in occupation
claiming, he was the Guru
and not the late Harkrishan

followers of Harji Mina
locked the doors in fear
for they dreaded now a fate
meted to pretender Dhir

whilst men of Amritsar
caused offence to the Guru
the women of the town
braved it as soldiers true

women of village Walla
invited the Guru over
Teg moved to their village
as darkness took its cover

Harmandar was occupied
by these brave women
the doors were opened
after the Guru had gone

assisted by Makhan Shah
they reprimanded the priests
and made them feel ashamed
at their wretched deed

Kiratpur

at the age of forty three
Teg was anointed the Guru
he plunged into his mission
with a zeal displayed by few

Teg arrived in Kiratpur
seat of his predecessor
the historic Guru's regalia
were kept at Kiratpur

sangats from all around
visited him on *Vaisakhi*
including *Mahants* of
Dacca, Patna, Varanasi

Rani Champa of Bilaspur
whose husband had died
came to pay respects
offered the Guru a site

Teg made a payment
for the site in question
and on mount *Makhawal*
started a new habitation

Chakk Nanki, its name,
changed to Anandpur
or the city of joy
Khalsa was created here

Teg left with his family
to visit the east
Mahants had invited him
and Teg had agreed

The East



starting from Anandpur
in the month of August
he passed through Ropar
then camped at Saifabad

the Nawab of Saifabad,
an admirer of the Guru
entertained him for days
before he let him go

the famous Kurkushetra
had Sikh shrines to view
honouring Guru Nanak,
the third and the sixth Guru

Teg stayed here a while
preaching Sikh gospel
the doubts of Brahmins
were harder to dispel

he left Kurukushetra
leaving the Brahmins a gift
a letter engraved in copper
in memory of this visit



in a brief stay at Delhi
Teg met the local Sikhs
Lakhi Shah, the Rajas
Jai Singh and others

passing through Mathura,
Agra, Kanpur and Fatehpur
he arrived in Allahabad
some six months later

next stop was Mirzapur
then the holy Benares
Teg Bahadur arrived here
mounted on a horse

where they camped
Ganges materialised
it was beneath the camp
and emerged from the site

the Sikhs dug the place
and the Guru just willed
the water gushed out
when a hole was drilled

the Guru left Benares
and headed for Sarsaram
here Phagu had prayed
for the Guru to come

as the Sikh had desired
Teg entered his gate
adorned on a horse
the Guru had kept a date

being pressed for time
Teg carried on his way
leaving the family at Patna
and arranging for their stay

Bengal

Teg camped at Monghyr
by the river Ganges
Sangats came everyday
for the Guru's blessings

after visiting Bhagalpur,
Malda and Gopalpur
Teg arrived in Dacca
by now it was October

an old lady in Dacca
had made for him a dress
and she had prayed
for his gracious presence

meanwhile at Patna
his son, Gobind was born
he learnt about it
whilst in Dacca town

the Guru kept on moving
one place, then another
from Sylhet to Chittagong
over the period of a year

he established *Sangats*
all along this route
in villages and in towns
from Chittagong to Sylhet

a Sikh *Sangat* was started
on the island of Sondip
he left his influence here
the tree was planted deep

Assam

Teg came back to Dacca
and planned his next trip
places graced by Guru Nanak
on the Assamese strip

Mughal officer Ram Rai
had orders to release
Gauhati from the Kamrup
the king of Assamese

scared of Kamrup magic
Ram asked for Guru's help
Teg accompanied him
travelling to Kamrup

at a place called Dhubri
where Nanak lit *His lamp*
Teg arrived with the Sikhs
and pitched his camp

the women magicians
camped on top of a hill
rolled down a boulder
for a major kill

the Guru's camp escaped
down by the hillside
the rock thundered by
and got buried on a side

Teg pulled at his bow
released a powerful arrow
the magic pitcher ruptured
so did the women's ego

the humbled women
gave up the magic path
the Guru blessed the lot
and guided them to truth

the Guru then arranged
a peace between the two
Aurengzeb's envoy Ram
and the king of Kamrup

a monument was built
by the Mughal soldiers
in honour of Guru Nanak
and Guru Teg Bahadur

Puri

Teg Bahadur came back
once again to Dacca
then he left for Puri
passing through Calcutta

Guru Teg Bahadur stayed
some two weeks at Puri
imparting *The Message*
to the people of the city

Return to Punjab

Teg Bahadur abandoned
a visit to southern regions
as Auregzeb was showing
increased fanatic madness

laws were being enacted
for terminating infidels
Hindus were the target
their blood was being spilled

from Puri the Guru
travelled back to Patna
the family were united
after a long separation

Teg and the followers
proceeded towards Delhi
and the family followed
travelling separately

on reaching Chakk Nanki
Teg made another round
covering this time
Malwa villages and towns

Martyrdom



with Aurengzeb's bigotry
much blood was spilling
he was forcing Islam
his methods were chilling

forceful conversion
of the Hindus to Islam
became official policy
of Emperor Aurengzeb

The cruel Iftikar Khan
Governor of Kashmir
was the chief instrument
of the Hindu massacre

A group of Brahmins
with Kirpa Dutt as leader
came to Chakk Nanaki
and met Guru Teg Bahadur

tale of the Hindu purge
was revealed to the master
how stacks of *Janaeous*
were being cast asunder



Teg told the Brahmins
to give Aurengzeb a bid
that they shall accept Islam
if Guru Teg Bahadur did

the Guru left for Agra
where the king was expected
Teg and his companions
were duly arrested

Teg was offered rewards
to accept Islamic path
or be prepared to face
the emperor's wrath

Teg Bahadur was ready
determined and steadfast
nothing could deter him
from his chosen path

they couldn't break him
or his companions
who were tortured to death
by those vicious men

in Chandni Chowk, Delhi
Teg Bahadur was beheaded
a fate he met with courage
a fate he never dreaded

the night that followed
a dust storm had blown
and in its blinding fury
the severed parts were gone

Lakhi Shah hid the body
in a cart of hay
brought it to his home
and burnt the house away

the head was collected
by Bhai Jaita of Delhi
he took it to Anandpur
after a hazardous journey

the young Guru Gobind
put flame to the funeral pyre
and the *sangats* present
offered the prayers

ashes arrived from Delhi
with the brave Lakhi Shah
he recounted to the Sikhs
an account of what he saw

Chapter 18

Guru Teg Bahadur Tales of the Guru

Martyrdom of the Guru

Aurengzeb the Mughal
was vicious and cruel
a fanatic and a bigot
he was fire and the fuel

Hindus were regarded
as a hoard of infidels
who must be converted
or else gotton rid off

death and destruction
had become a norm
the Hindus wern't safe
in this vicious storm

the schools and temples
symbols of Hindu culture
were particular targets
of the wayward Mughal

Vishwanath shrine at Benares
was levelled down
so was Keshvari temple
in the Mathura town

conversion to Islam
was a policy of the state
forced on pain of death
it was a dreaded fate

the cruel Iftikar Khan
the Governor of Kashmir
started the Hindu purge
and swung it into gear

the man's killer instinct
needed no further urge
enough was his obsession
Hindus were a scourage

Brahamins of Kashmir
met at Amarnath shrine
where a dream revealed
a guidance divine

with Kirpa as a leader
and in circumstances grim
they met Guru Teg Bahadur
to state their case to him

sad tale of the Brahmins
was heard by the master
how *Janeous* in thousands
were being torn asunder

the Guru was distressed
and troubled in mind
when Gobind, barely nine
walked in from behind

amidst the Brahmins
sat his much worried dad
Gobind looked at him
and said "you do look sad"

" the earth is heavy
with tyranny and dread
a sacrifice is needed
of a great and noble head"

the brave lad responded
relieving his dad's tension
" who is better than you
for a task of this dimension"

Brahmins were advised
to give Aurengzeb a bid
everyone shall accept Islam
If Guru Teg Bahadur did

the Guru then left for Agra
the king was expected here
Teg and his companions
were arrested over there

they were moved to Delhi
and kept under house arrest
then the torture started
it began with caging first

Teg was offered rewardss
to accept the Islamic path
he should comply
or face the king's wrath

Teg Bahadur was solid
determined and steadfast
nothing could deter him
from his chosen path

they couldn't break him
as they tortured his Sikhs
Bhai Matti Dass was the first
who went through this

Matti Dass was sawn
he was sliced into two
the cruel deed was enacted
In front of the Guru

Bhai Dyalla was next
he was boiled in a cauldron
the Sikh kept his faith
and he couldn't be won

Teg was then to bear
Bhai Satti Dass's ordeal
who was burnt alive
defending the Sikh ideal

both carrot and the stick
had failed in the end
the revered Guru
will neither yield nor bend

in Chandni Chowk Delhi
Teg was beheaded
a fate he met with calm
a fate he never dreaded

during that night
a dust storm had blown
in its blinding fury
the severed parts were gone

Lakhi Shah hid the body
in a cart of hay
brought it inside his home
and burnt the house away

the head was collected
by Bhai Jaita of Delhi
who took it to Anandpur
after a hazardous journey

the young Guru Gobind
put flame to the funeral pyre
and the sangats present
offered the prayers

ashes arrived from Delhi
with the brave Lakhi Shah
he recounted to the sangats
an account of what he saw

Slok

*Nanak, let us understand
he who finds no joy in happiness
and in sorrow finds no pain
finds the friend and foe alike
at par, the same
regard him then
a liberated man*

Guru Teg Bahadur

Guru Ladhoray

At Sea

The weather was bad, the ship ran aground
it was a weird and eerie neighbourhood
a frightening void and no help around
stranded in such solitude, he stood
Makhan Shah Labana was much worried
for his ship and the cargo of goods
a devout Sikh, Makhan Shah prayed
finding him in distress and so dismayed
the great Guru responded and He was swift
Labana knew, as the help was rendered
the ship rose up and started to drift
the grateful Labana prayed and tendered
a promise to thank the Guru at His seat
with five hundred gold coins at His feet

At Delhi

By royal command, Guru Harkrishan
and the Sikhs had come to Delhi town
here cholera and then smallpox had set in
and everyday saw more people go down

yet all this danger, the Sikhs were defying
nursing the sick and those who were dying
the Guru himself, Harkrishan His Grace
blessed the distressed, provided solace
but the Guru himself caught the disease
smallpox and was moved to Jamuna bank
here the Sikhs saw him at great unease
sadness spread around as he gradually sank
but before the end the Gūru uttered a clue
"Baba Bakala" a cue to the next Guru

Bakala

Many a pretender at Bakala who had heard
set themselves as the Guru of the Sikhs
taking advantage of Harkrishan's words
they waited at Bakala with a bag of tricks
Makhan Shah came to see the Guru around
fakes and pretenders were all he found
when not satisfied, he was told of one Teg
a loner and a recluse, may be he wasn't a fake
Teg was in meditation, Makhan Shah bowed
laid two gold coins and he turned to go
Teg Bahadur spoke, "you had promised more"
Labana was excited and jumped on the floor
he climbed the roof, and shouted "hooray,
I have found the Guru, *Guru ladhoray*"

Chapter 19

Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708)

Life Sketch of the Guru

The year 1666
in the Indian calendar
brought in a special day
the 22nd. of December

on this auspicious day
arrived a special person
His envoy extraordinary
to accomplish His mission

Guru Gobind Singh
the tenth Guru was born
in the town of Patna, where
his mum was sojourned

his dad, Guru Teg Bahudur
was touring miles away
having left the family at Patna
as a child was on the way

the Guru had left advice
what to name the boy
accordingly the child
was named Gobind Rai

on Teg Bahadur's return
some four years later
the little Gobind Rai
was well-nigh a toddler

plans were soon afoot
for ending the Guru's tour
the Guru and the family
went back to Anandpur

Gobind and his mates
will play soldiers in war
good at riding horses
he was a good all rounder

the boy soon mastered
both Sanskrit and Persian
he was good at writing
and wielded a versatile pen

a born poet, he wrote
very moving verse
in many languages
and subjects diverse

Teg's Martyrdom

with Aurengzeb's bigotry
much blood was spilling
he was forcing Islam
his methods were chilling

forceful conversion
of the Hindu race
became official policy
of Emperor Aurengzeb

the blood was spilling
in Kashmir and elsewhere
Hindus were targeted
almost everywhere

Brahmins of Kashmir
met at Amarnath shrine
they were revealed here
a plan, a plan divine

The group of Brahmins
with Kirpa Dutt as leader
sought help at Anandpur
from Guru Teg Bahadur

the tale of Hindu purge
was told to the master
how stacks of *Janaeous*
were being cast asunder

Teg Bahudur listened
he was pensive and sad
when Gobind asked him
"what ails thee dad. "

" the earth is heavy
with tyranny and dread;
a sacrifice is needed
of a great and noble head"

the boy Gobind responded
promptly to the Guru
" who indeed could be
more noble than you"

Teg Bahadur's decision
was instantly made
The Guru gave his life
Hinduism was saved

Gobind was barely nine
as he became the Guru
yet he proved equal
to challenges, old and new

The early years



Gobind was married
to Bibi Jito *ji* of Lahore
the wedding took place
in the city of Anandpur

keen on hunting, the Guru
will hunt lion or wild boar
his skills in these sports
were tops, even more

the foothills of Himalayas
has a kingdom of Sirmur
its king invited the Guru
to its capital for a tour

a few miles from there
was a beautiful spot
where Jamuna flowed
and nature ruled the lot

the Guru liked the site
it was remote and aloof
it is now called "Pointa"
named after his horse's hoof



the Guru liked the place
the vista of its scenic hills
he planned and he built
a fortress in this still

this peaceful countryside
endeared itself to the Guru
he happily spent some years
relishing this wondrous view

The Battle of Bhangani

the neighbouring Rajas
of surrounding hill states
picked quarrels with him
showed jealousy and hate

Fateh Shah of Srinagar
a neighbour of Simrur
organised an attack
to crush the rising Guru

the Raja's forces fought
the Guru at Bhangani
just a handful of Sikhs
repulsed a bigger enemy

serving with the Guru
were hundreds of Pathans
they came from Aurengzeb
mostly disgruntled men

most of these Pathans
joined the Rajas ranks
abandoning Guru's ship
a ship that never sank

only a handful of Sikhs
fought against all odds
killed many a soldier
Rajas battle was lost

many a defector Pathan
were killed in the field
the Guru was victorious
the Rajas fate was sealed

The Birth of the Khalsa

Baisakhi of year 1699
was specially awaited
Anandpur was ready
many Sikhs were invited

large number of Sikhs
came on this occasion
gathering everywhere
in tents and pavilions

the programme began
as always, with prayers
Mani Dass sang the hymns
the Guru himself was there

the Guru stood on stage
unsheathed his sword
faced the Sikhs assembled
and then he roared

I want a head, he said
yes I need a Sikh's head
a sacrifice is needed
for the cause ahead

the gathering fell silent
the *Sikhs* were stunned
the weak got up and left
the daring shall not run

Daya of Lahore stood up
tall in the gathering's eye
take my head my Lord
by thy sword, I am glad to die

the Guru led him into a tent
when he came out, they eyed
his sword was dripping in blood
I need another head, he cried



more Sikhs left the gathering
but the brave ones stayed
in the ensuing silence
Dharm Das of Delhi obeyed

they entered the tent and
the Guru emerged repeating
yet another head is needed
heated stood the meeting

Mokam Chand and Himmat
volunteered one by one
they were taken in the tent
and the Guru emerged alone

when Sahib offered himself
and they entered the tent
then there was a silence
and to much astonishment

when the Guru emerged
the five emerged as well
the gathering was hilarious
things were turning well



attired in saffron robes
stood the five brave men
each one had adorned
a blue coloured turban

the five were now baptised
with Amrit by the Guru
and ushered into the Khalsa
a fold of soldiers true

the master cum disciple
Guru Gobind on his own
was now baptised himself
by the five beloved men

many others were baptised
and joined the new fold
it was the order of Khalsa
saintly, brave and bold

Rajas & the Mughal

ascent of the Khalsa
with its radical view
scared a lot of Hindus
whose fears grew

colluding with the *Mughal*
Hindu Rajas of the hills, once again
raided Guru's Anandpur
to finish his spiritual reign

it was a severe battle
that was bravely fought
Rajas suffered but did
manage a siege at last

Sikhs were in the fort
the enemy stood in wait
the supplies depleted
the *Sikhs* got desperate

some wanted to leave
against the Guru's view
and forty men did leave
they defied the Guru

later a note arrived
from *Rajas* and the king
promising a safe conduct
for the Guru and the *Singhs*

but as the Guru's party
abandoned the fort
the enemy closed in
flouting its written word

they were engaged
by the Guru at Chamkaur
the enemy was fresh
the Sikhs, hungry and sore

most Sikhs were killed
including Ajit and Jujhar
three of the beloved five
also fell at Chamkaur

the Guru himself escaped
in overgrowth, he wandered
tired but yet determined
the Guru was not deterred

Sikhs who defied the Guru
couldn't face their women
chided by their woman folk
returned to fight again

they engaged the enemy
at the site of Khidrana
everyone was killed
but for one named Mahan

the Guru was aggrieved
as he passed by these
Mahan, who was dying
asked pardon for deceased

the Guru felt relieved, as
he blessed the fallen lads
he promised Mahan Singh
they shall be remembered

meanwhile at Sirhand
Guru's younger sons
met a gruesome fate
through the Mughal demon

Zorawar and Fateh
merely nine and seven
were bricked alive in a wall
by the cruel Wazir Khan

the Guru condemned
king Aurengzeb in a letter
how he had connived
immorally in some matters

the letter written in Persian
was venomous to the king
after reading through it
Aurengzeb felt a sting

the king issued the orders
to make peace with the Guru
the Guru was around Sirhand
and he was being pursued

after thoughtful wandering
in the lakhi jungle maze
the Guru prepared himself
to begin the next phase

Adi Granth

stationed at Damdama
he worked on *Adi Granth*
to authenticate a copy
for the future Sikh *sangat*

the Granth was originally
compiled by Guru Arjan
he had dictated the text
Bhai Gurdas took dictation

Now Guru Gobind Singh
dictated it to Mani Dass
and the two together
accomplished the task

hymns of the ninth Guru
were now incorporated
and the Granth today
stays, as was then dictated

The Final Trip

the Guru was ready to move
and the holy Granth was read
complete from cover to cover
from the beginning to end

Karah Parsad was disbursed
and the Guru then left
he headed towards Nander
with a party of Sikh *sangat*

in Rajisthan, he learnt
Aurengzeb had died
he revised his plans and
returned to Delhi side

he came to Delhi
to help prince Muazzam
as among the king's sons
he deserved the kingdom

the Sikhs fought with him
in the battle of Jajmau
the prince was victorious
and crowned Bahadur Shah

in a ceremony at Delhi
the king honoured the Guru
bestowed robes on him
and respects meant for few

Deccan

soon the king was called
to quell a brother's rebellion
the Guru agreed to join him
whilst travelling to Deccan

for framing a religious policy
the king consulted the Guru
the two met enroute
to reach a common view

but the Guru soon felt
the king was under pressure
the *Mullahs* of Islam
won't let him manoeuvre

On reaching Decann
they parted company
the Guru went to Nander
on the river Godavri

Banda Bahudur

A *bairagi* called Madho
known for powers of occult
lived in the village Nander
and enjoyed his powers felt

face to face with the Guru
Madho simply cowed down
he fell on Guru's feet, pledged
to serve his righteous crown

Madho was baptised
brought into the Khalsa fold
he was named Banda Singh
now called, Banda the Bold

Banda was assigned
to cleanse Punjab
five Sikhs accompanied him
for this colossal job

Banda moved through
at the speed of hell
storming his way through
mowing down the Mughal

he killed them at Sirhand
including the cruel Wazir Khan
and he soon became
a major force to reckon

The End

during his stay at Nander
whilst the Guru lay for rest
the enemy moved in and
stabbed him in the chest

with a lightening stroke
the Guru killed the man
there was an accomplice
Sikhs killed him as he ran

The king was not afar
he learned of this affair
he sent his own physician
to attend to Guru's care

the wound was fresh
the Guru stretched a bow
it yielded at the stitches
the blood began to flow

the *sangat* was called in
and assembled in his view
a copy of the *holy Granth*
was brought to the Guru

before the sacred *Sangat*
the Guru proclaimed his view
that the *holy Granth* shall be
henceforth the *Sikh's* Guru

the year was 1708
and he was ready to go
he said good bye and departed
leaving behind his glow

'*waheguru ji ka khalsa*
waheguru ki fateh', his bye
stays resounding here
on earth and up there in sky

A game of love - is what you wish to play
with your head in hand, then come my way
step onto this road, on this Highway
laying your head, you should not sway

Guru Nanak Dev

Chapter 20

Guru Gobind Singh Tales of the Guru

Birth of the Khalsa

Turn of the century, 1699
Vaisakhi festival was coming
it was a special occasion
Anandpur was humming

Sikhs were invited from afar
to join a special occasion
and many thousands arrived
filling the tents and pavilions

Huge crowds had gathered
something was in the air
the meeting began with prayers
the Guru himself was there

the Guru stepped on the dais
and from where he stood
he pulled his sword and raised it
causing a stir, no one understood

he spoke, pathos in his voice
"I want a gallant head," he said
"sacrifice of a life is needed
for the cause that lies ahead"

Silence fell on those assembled
the Sikh *sangat* was stunned
the weak were scared and left
Guru's voice rose above everyone

Daya of Lahore made a move
he stood tall in the gathering's eye
"take my head, my Lord", he said
"by thy sword, I am glad to die"

The Guru led Daya to a tent
a sound was heard inside, a thud
and when the Guru emerged
his sword was steeped in blood

the Guru was back on the dais
his sword was raised, they eyed
he looked at them and then
"I need another head", he cried

more Sikhs left the gathering
only the brave ones stayed
the lot were in a state of shock
as Dharam Das obeyed

Once again, they entered the tent
and the Guru emerged repeating
“yet another head is needed”
it was hotting up in the meeting

Mokkam, Himmat and Sahib
offered themselves for the cause
each in turn was led to the tent
but then there came a pause

the Guru emerged this time
with those five, all neatly attired
the gathering jumped in joy
thrilled at what transpired

the men were clad in saffron
and their turbans were blue
the assembled looked admiringly
and relished the precious view

the Guru praised the five
their courage and devotion
the men bowed in humility
charged with much emotion

these five beloved men
with death defying genes
were the first of the *Khalsa*
Panj Pyaras on the scene

this was a special task
assigned by God to the Guru
who now prayed for the Khalsa
to be blessed with virtues true

the Guru prepared a nectar
Amrit to baptise these men
to impart valour, caring love
Guru's grace and true religion

it was made in an iron urn
wherein water was poured
some sugar was stirred in
with a double edged sword

sugar was specially added
to comply with Jeeto *ji's* view
thus blending in this nectar
sweet feminine virtues too

divine hymns were chanted
and these were repeated
till the *Amrit* ceremony
was finally completed

with swords in the hands
and on the left knee poised
as soldiers in a combat pose
the five were now baptised

Palmful of the holy Amrit
was passed to each in turn
they sipped it as they uttered
these holy words in unison

*"Waheguru ji ka Khalsa,
Waheguru ji ki Fateh"*
both Khalsa and the victory
come from God Almighty

they were anointed, Amrit
was sprinkled on their face
on their eyes and their hair
and in the final act of grace

Amrit was sipped by the five
from the same common urn
a brotherhood was fostered
and new values were won

Guru himsef was baptised
the five assisted in this act
others were invited to join
they did, with much respect

many thousands on that day
came into the *Khalsa* fold
the order of *Khalsa* was ready
an order of the kind and the bold

Sanctity of Work



Gobind was enthroned
in the Guru durbar
and many a Sikh
was gathered there

the Guru felt thirsty
and made a request
for a drink of water
to the Sikh *sangat*

a *khatri* youth
was rather fast
he stood up quickly
and paid respects

may he be allowed
to fetch the water
he shall be honoured
by this favour

the Guru looked
saw a young lad
he seemed tender
rather well bred



your hands are soft
and seem rather tender
have these been used
for work, I wonder

the youth replied
very seldom before
for we have servants
for every chore

when the youth
brought the water
the Guru refused it
the boy was shattered

the Guru declared
the water was impure
though the youth
insisted it was pure

the master explained
the water wasn't pure
for it was handled
by the hands impure

then he addressed
the whole Sikh *sangat*
on the sanctity of work
in the Sikh context

hands and body
are purified
by honest work
service unqualified

the *khatri* youth
had learned
the purity of body
has to be earned

he got busy now
in the *langar*
working and serving
for endless hours

whenever now
he served the water
the Guru drank it
with much pleasure

*When I shall make
sparrows fight the hawks
and just one Sikh
fight myriads, sawa lakh
then alone, am worth
my name, Gobind Singh*

Guru Gobind Singh



Boy Gobind

Gobind and his mates
often enjoyed a treat
boat ride in the Ganges
respice from summer heat

together they will play
nothing else did matter
but the soothing wind
the cold Himalayan water

as they rowed one day
the boat sort of tripped
Gobind hardly noticed
his bangle had slipped

it was a bangle of gold
that fell in muddy water
the mates were scared
to him, it didn't matter

and his darling mother
showed much concern
how did the bangle slip
or was it thrown in fun

as she wanted to see
the place it was lost
the kids were excited
took her to the spot

the mum looked around
and asked her little one
where did it fall
'Gobind, my darling son'

tossing the other bangle
in the swirling river
shouted the boy Gobind
"dear Mum, over there"

*All those who shall call me God
shall enter dark pit of hell
For have no doubt on what I tell
merely a servant of The Primal Lord
am here to see this wondrous world
Guru Gobind Singh in Bachitar Natak*



Bhai Kanhiya



Yet another battle was fought
in high spirits like the rest
the Sikhs, the soldier-saints
swung into action, full of zest

The dazzle dazed the men deployed
the weapons glared in the sun
the battle cries were deafening
angel of death, hovered on everyone

The swipes of swinging swords
swept swiftly, inflicting fatal blows
the arrows aimed at the enemy
tore through the wanted foes

Dead and the wounded had fallen
as muskets fired the rounds
smoke and dust obscured the vision
heat and blood fouled the ground

Hours later, as the horror settled
the nature was rendered mute
when the peace and quiet returned
the demand for water was acute



Some soldiers had fallen dead
but the wounded needed tending
from the injured and the exhausted
the cries for water were unending

There moved a lonesome figure
amidst the injured and the dead
Bhai Kanhiaya, a Guru's soldier
served water, in this dread

Deftly, the man drifted around
nursing the wounded he was tending
you could see him serve them water
watch him, his tall frame bending

Lost in the love of his Guru
Bhai Kanhiaya served everyone
he served the enemy injured
as he would serve the Sikh brethren

Kanhiaya's strange behaviour
was brought to the Guru's attention
when the Guru summoned the man
he showed no fear or apprehension

"I did serve them all," he said
"as I didn't see any Sikh or enemy
all I could see in those faces, Lord
were you, a picture of thee"

The Guru smiled for he was pleased
the burden on his mind had eased
Bhai Kanhiya had understood
whatever is bad and what is good

*Shiva, God Almighty
pray do confer
a blessing on me
not to deter or flee
from pious deeds
and in a battle
there shouldn't occur
any fear in me
determined, I may spur
myself to victory
and pray Almighty
let my mind gather
a gift from Thee
a craving to utter
praises of Your majesty
when the end is nigh
Let me then enter
the battle heat
in a fit of frenzy
ecstatic, I may die*

Guru Gobind Singh

Chapter 21

Guru Granth Sahib

The everlasting Guru

Guru Gobind Singh declared
Adi Granth as the Guru
for all times to come
for every Sikh to follow

a treasury of Guru's word
a perpetual light to view
the revered Guru Granth Sahib
is the last but ever lasting Guru

Guru Nanak in his travels
was known to carry a book
an anthology of his hymns
a diary or *pothi* of his trips

it was passed to Guru Angad
as he became the Guru
the hymns in it were sung
by Sikh *sangats* as they grew

Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru
saw the need to collate
compositions of the Gurus
for the Sikhs of future date

messages were sent around
to all Sikhs, everywhere
to deposit the Guru's hymns
in Guru Arjan's care

Guru Amardas's son Mohan
inherited *pothis* from the sage
but he refused to part
with his precious heritage

Baba Budda and Bhai Gurdas
were specially sent
they had no luck with Mohan
who will just not relent

finally Guru Arjan himself
went to Goindwaal to try
he serenaded his *tambura*
sang hymns of The High

Baba Mohan melted away
in the magic of the hymns
and parted with the *pothis*
his prized possession

the pothis were accorded
respect and veneration
and were brought to Amritsar
in a holy procession



the bedecked *pothis*
were placed in a palanquin
it was carried by the Sikhs,
followed by Guru Arjan

the cavalcade moved on
and headed for Amritsar
paying homage at Khandoor
to the great Guru Angad

Sikhs waited outside Amritsar
along with young Hargobind
they all welcomed the party
rejoicing was in the wind

Bhai Gurdas and Baba Budda
were carrying the palanquin
as the party entered Amritsar
everyone was singing hymns

thanksgiving ceremony
was conducted by Guru Arjan
who, with all this material
was ready now for action



besides the Guru's writings
there was a collection
hymns from Indian saints
of varied castes and regions

hymns of lower caste saints
Saini, Ravidas and Kabir
together with Sheikh Farid
and the Sufi Muslim fakir

for completing the task
Guru Arjan picked a spot
right in the midst of nature
in the nearby forest lot

in the peaceful surrounding
he had a tent erected
and with Bhai Gurdas to help
a model was perfected

Bhai Gurdas wrote in hand
as Guru Arjan dictated
the script used was Gurmukhi
and the *Granth* was collated

each hymn of the Guru's
was uniquely assigned
so were the hymns of saints
allocated and defined

musical styles were stated
for each and every hymn
classifying them as *Slok*, *Pauri*
or some other composition

the Adi Granth produced
was two thousand pages
many were left blank
to be filled by future sages

venue for the *holy Granth*
was chosen to be Harmandar
Baba Budda was assigned
to look after this wonder

from the Ramsar site
they moved to Harmandar
Baba Budda carried the Granth
followed by Guru Arjan

musicians sang the hymns
on the way to Harmandar
where the Baba laid it down
and read it as hereunder

*"God Himself accedes
to His followers need
He has Himself arrived
to accomplish the deed*

*the place is enchanting
and beautiful is the pool
the waters are ambrosial
the Amrit pool is full"*

at day time, the *holy Granth*
was enthroned and read
it was laid to rest at night
after the prayers were said

a room was provided
for resting the *holy Granth*
it was wrapped up in silks
and laid on a palanquin

the much cherished *Granth*
became central to Sikh life
the Guru and the *Granth*
were guides in every strife

the original *holy Granth*
served the Sikhs at Amritsar
later Guru Hargobind
moved it to Kartarpur

from Guru Hargobind
the copy went to Dhir Mal
and descendants of Dhir Mal
possess it now as well

the Granth was updated later
and brought to completion
Guru Gobind Singh himself
accomplished this mission

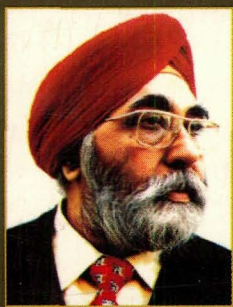
Bhai Mani Das recorded
Guru Gobind Singh's dictation
gradually the colossal task
was brought to completion

Guru Teg Bahadur's hymns
were added to the Granth
but Guru Gobind Singh's *Bani*
is conspicuously absent

Sikhism is the most recent of the major religions in the world. It was founded by Guru Nanak in the fifteenth century and has flourished to a point that there are more Sikhs now than the Jews in the world.

The basic postulates of the Sikh faith were laid down by Guru Nanak and were consolidated and augmented by nine further Gurus over a period of two centuries. The Gurus created the ethos of the religion and established an array of institutions. *Gurdwaras*, the Sikh temples are not only the hub of spiritual activity but are community centres that run a free kitchen, serving hot meals (*Langars*) to the Sikh and non-Sikhs alike, provide other amenities like free temporary stay, nursery education and medical help. Besides a moral and spiritual life, the Sikh Gurus taught their followers to resist evil and evil doers. **A Sikh is expected to be a saint as well as a soldier.**

The lives of Sikh Gurus, a rich story of devotion and sacrifices is a revealing reflection to the tenets of the Sikh faith. This book relates this story in a series of compelling tales, written specially for the Sikh youth and the uninitiated.



Jaswinder Singh Chadha was educated at St. Stephen's College, Delhi in India and was a research scientist with Unilever at Welwyn, Herts in England. After a successful career in Science and thereafter in his own business, he has devoted much of the last fifteen years to the study of the Sikh religion and Sikh Gurus. A renowned Sikh poet, Jaswinder, subsequent to this book, first published in 1999, has also a translation of Japji Sahib (1999) and a third book on the life and teachings of Guru Tegh Bahadur, co-authored with Dr Hakam Singh, all written in English.

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